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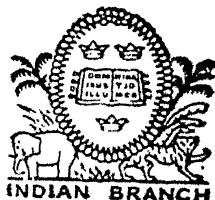
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SPECIMENS OF
THE ORAL LITERATURE OF MIDDLE INDIA

FOLK-TALES
OF
MAHAKOSHAL

VERRIER ELWIN
D.Sc. (Oxon)



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TO
SIR SORAB AND LADY SAKLATVALA

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My heart of silk
is filled with lights,
with lost bells,
with lilies and with bees.
And I will go very far,
farther than those hills,
farther than the seas,
close to the stars . . .
. . . to give me back
my ancient soul of a child,
matured with legends,
with the feathered cap
and the wooden sword.

—F. GARCIA LORCA

INTRODUCTION

THIS book is, I hope, the first of several which will assemble and preserve for English-speaking readers specimens of the oral literature of Middle India. This first volume offers folk-tales from Mahakoshal.¹ The second will present a collection of folk-songs from the Maikal Hills, and the third a similar selection of songs from Chhattisgarh. These volumes will be issued independently and each will be a separate and complete work. There is still a very great field for research and collection throughout Middle India and though these volumes can obviously give nothing more than samples which indicate the type of literature that exists in the minds and on the lips of the folk, they will serve some purpose of illustration and preservation.

The tales in the present volume have been collected from the Mandla, Seoni, Balaghat, Bilaspur and Raipur Districts of the Central Provinces and from the Rewa, Kawardha, Saranagarh and Bastar States. They have been recorded exclusively from members of the aboriginal tribes, for it is only among such people that one can suppose with any kind of probability that the stories repeated are truly oral and not derived from books. Those who read this book for pleasure—and I hope there will be some, for many of the stories seem to me beautiful and interesting in themselves—will not be concerned with their setting and background. But for a real understanding of the tales some knowledge of the people who tell them and the social and economic conditions against which they are set is essential. For the Maria we are fortunate in having a first-rate monograph by W. V. Grigson, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*; for the tribes of the northern districts Russell and Hiralal's *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces* may be consulted, as well as my own books on the Baiga, the Agaria, the Maria and the Muria.

An American anthropologist² has estimated that we have now in printed form accessible to occidental readers some 3,000

¹ Nationalist India divides the Central Provinces into Vidarbha to the west and Mahakoshal which includes most of the eastern States and Districts.

² N. Brown in *J.A.O.S.*, xxxix, 2. I am not altogether sure about Brown's methods of scoring, and to judge by his bibliography given at 44ff. of the same volume of the *J.A.O.S.*, he has missed a number of collections. But his figures will serve as a basis of comparison.

stories from India and the adjacent countries of Ceylon, Tibet, Burma and the Malaya Peninsula. I estimate that hitherto about 50 have been collected from the Central Provinces. With 150 tales in this collection and the 55 tales in my other three works, the Central Provinces will be represented by a total of 255 tales which is a fairly good representation as against 310 from Ceylon, 230 from the Santal Parganas and 200 from the Punjab.

It must not be supposed, of course, that all these 3,000 stories are different stories. Even the remotest and shyest aboriginals have been affected by the wide diffusion during the centuries of the chief motifs of Hindu fiction. 'In India,' says Bloomfield, 'even more than in other countries, entire stories, or particular story traits go on repeating themselves. To begin with, many legends of the ancient Vedic text reappear, usually much elaborated, in Epic, in Drama, and in story-books. A new and more sweeping current of fiction sets in with the didactic and parabolic fables and stories of the *Panchatantra-Jataka* type, the latter being reinforced by the stories of Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Dhammapada and the Avadanas. Parallel with these run the Jains' performances of the type of Devendra's stories and the commentators to the Avacyaka literature. In between come the individualist novelists who handle stories in the most ornate style of rhetoric: Dandin, Bana and Subandhu. Then sets in the purer, more secular fiction (which, however, never quite abandons the moralities) of the *Brhat-Katha* books and its congeners and successors. The classical representatives of this class are the three renditions of the *Brhat-Katha*, namely *Kathasaritsagara*, *Brhatkathamamajari* and *Brhatkathaloksangraha*; the various recensions of the *Vetalapancavincati*; of the *Vikramacharita*; and of the *Cuksaptati*. And they, in turn, are followed as regards type by the well-nigh infinite line of *Caritas* or *Prabandhas* which begin with Brahmanical writers, and swell into a veritable ocean of literary procreation through the activity of the prolific Jains.'

During the last century there has been a large output of industry and some very pretty writing in the service of the Indian folk-tale. Of the collections before us, Bloomfield says again, 'During the last forty years Europeans and natives have vied with one another in gathering up stories that go by

word of mouth, and yet more will certainly be collected in the future through the length and breadth of India. Quite certainly these collections echo largely the old stories of the various Hindu classical literatures. Whether they contain material of independent sort, that is to say, old original stories which propagated themselves orally without ever having been written down in any Hindu language, is very doubtful. But they will be found to figure largely and stimulatingly in connection with almost every type of story or motif of the classical literatures. Secondary treatment of Hindu fiction is, moreover, not restricted to the immense continent of India, but has passed largely, though not entirely, under the Buddhist propaganda, to the greater part of Central and Eastern Asia, so that Hindu narrative is almost synonymous with Asiatic narrative: Tibetan, Mongolian, Farther Indian, Chinese and so on. And I am leaving out of account, as no longer directly concerning India or quasi-India, the well-known fact, equally important, but in another way, that the Hindu story collections and individual stories have passed as loans into Western Asia and Europe, as Benfey and his collaborators and successors up to Hertel have shown.

'The more significant or salient traits of these stories—motifs as we may call them—are distributed or rearranged anew in every time and clime of India. Everywhere each narrator and recorder takes up, as it were, the whole chain of these motifs, which we may liken to a chain of beads. He tears it apart so that the beads scatter in every direction, and then he strings them up in a new arrangement. Thus any motif may turn up at any time, in any place, and practically in any connection in Hindu fiction and its tributaries.'

Let us briefly survey the chief collections of Indian folk-tales hitherto recorded, for it is impossible to regard the oral literature of any one area in isolation. It is essential to relate it to the whole body of folk literature.

The first important moment in the collection of this literature was when Sir Richard Temple edited and published the Rev. S. Hislop's papers relating to the aboriginal tribes of the Central Provinces in 1866. These papers represent the first serious attempt to record a substantial folk-tale and to present it along with the original in a literary form. Unfortunately Hislop's gallant venture bore no fruit, possibly because of the unattractive way in which it was presented and the severe scholarship of its tone. This was not the case, however, with a little book that appeared two years later,

Miss Frere's delightful *Old Deccan Days*, a collection of stories that at once caught the imagination of collectors all over India and which has since been translated into several European languages. Three years later, in 1871, there were two important events in the ethnographic world. Dalton published in Calcutta his superb *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* and Damant began his series of Bengal folk-tales in *The Indian Antiquary*, which he continued regularly until his death during the Mozema Naga rising in October 1879. *The Indian Antiquary* continued to publish folk-tales collected from all parts of India for many years, but it was not until the year of Damant's death that another important book of tales appeared. In 1883, we have the Rev. L. B. Day's excellent *Folk-Tales of Bengal*. Day's book was dedicated to R. C. Temple, then a Captain of the Bengal Staff Corps, who the following year himself issued the first of his three volumes containing legends of the Punjab. The following year he published with Mrs F. A. Steel the brilliantly written *Wide-Awake Stories*, which was doubly important because the authors prepared a classified list of the incidents found in such tales as were then available for study. In the same year Natesa Sastri, whose industry was not always matched by his scholarship and candour, published a collection of the many tales which he had printed in *The Indian Antiquary*.

In 1890 Crooke, probably the best folklorist that there has been in India, began publication of his little periodical *North Indian Notes and Queries*, which printed many tales. In the next few years two well-known missionaries began to collect folk-tales, the Rev. A. Campbell from among the Santal and the Rev. J. H. Knowles in Kashmir. In the first decade of the present century we have a valuable work by R. S. Mukharji, *Indian Folklore*, published in Calcutta, Mrs Dracott's charming *Simla Village Tales*, and the Rev. C. Swynnerton's *Romantic Tales from the Panjab*, which in its 1908 edition embodied all the author's previous publications. In 1909 C. H. Bompas, a member of the Indian Civil Service, translated and published what is still one of the most admirable collections we have, made from among the Santal by the Rev. O. Bodding. This book appeared without notes and with only a scanty introduction, but it was so obviously authentic and the translation so simply and naturally done that it remains a model of such research. A number of other books of folk-tales, some valuable like M'Culloch's *Bengali Household Tales* and Devi's *Orient Pearls*,

but many slight and rather spurious, appeared shortly before the first World War. The most important work of this time was Parker's three-volume collection of *Village Folk-Tales of Ceylon*, which followed the example of *Wide-Awake Stories* in indicating many parallels in different parts of the world.

In more recent times the impetus to the collection of folk-tales appears to have largely spent itself, and writers have devoted their attention rather to their scholarly investigation. Penzer's ten-volume edition of Tawney's *Katha Sarit Sagara* and the brilliant works of the American scholars of the school of Bloomfield, as well as many contributions on a humbler scale to the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* and *Man in India* now threw a flood of fresh light on Hindu fiction and its relation to the village tale. Unfortunately, anthropologists (except in Assam) did not show any great enthusiasm for collecting further tales. In Sarat Chandra Roy's books we only have a few, not very well translated, stories. In the great works of the Ethnographic Survey of India hardly a dozen folk-tales can be found. In Grigson's study of the Maria Gond, he only gives two short stories and those not for their own sake but as linguistic specimens.

On the other hand the corpus of Indian folk-tales regarded as a whole is not unimpressive. It includes a wide variety of tales, cumulative stories, legends of place, hero-myths, marchen, ballads and drolls. But it undoubtedly suffers from certain serious defects.

Far too many of the collections of stories, which are solemnly quoted by scholars in the most learned works, were made and published purely for entertainment. Thus Swynerton says his aim was 'to lighten the burden of life, to mask a sorrow or force a smile'. Many of the other works had the same purpose. But what is not scientifically intended may not be scientifically based, and there is no *guarantee* of such books. A heavy curtain of sentiment hangs over many of the collections. The transformation of the Indian tale which is often realistic, forthright and coarse into a romantic English nursery story, with a Sir Bumble, Prince Lionheart and dear little Lambikin, charming as it may be, is of doubtful validity.

Many of our collections have been issued with the most remarkable disregard of any kind of precision about names, places, dates, the language in which the tales were originally told, and the method of recording. In this respect, however, the authoress of *Old Deccan Days* set an admirable example.

Miss Frere was the daughter of Sir Bartle Frere, Governor of Bombay. She makes no pretence that her stories were collected in the villages or from primitive people. She describes how, on tour through the Southern Mahratta country, where the Governor's equipage consisted of about six hundred souls, she was the only lady of the party and was accompanied by Anna Liberata D'Souza, 'her native ayah'. Anna was a member of the Lingayat caste who had been converted to Catholicism. Miss Frere describes how this woman told her stories during the long days when she was forced to be alone. They were told in expressive but broken English, and Miss Frere notes the interesting point that if any one came into the room whilst Anna was speaking or if she were otherwise disturbed, it was apparently impossible for her to gather up the thread of the narration where it had been dropped, and she had to begin afresh at the beginning of the story as at the commencement of some long-forgotten melody. 'She had, I believe, not heard any of the stories after she was eleven years old when her grandmother had died.' Unfortunately Miss Frere's candour has only been rarely imitated. Even the Rev. L. B. Day leaves us very vague about his methods of recording. He says that it would be no exaggeration to say he had heard 'thousands' of fairy tales from an old woman in his youth, but that 'they had all got confused in his head, the tail of one story being joined to the head of another and the head of the third to the tail of a fourth.' Later he found a Bengali Christian woman who 'when a little girl and living in her heathen home had heard many stories from her old grandmother'. He got other stories from an old Brahmin, an old barber, and an old servant, none of whom knew English but told their tales in Bengali. But we do not know to what caste Day's informants belonged, where they lived, whether they had had any kind of education or indeed anything about them. Mrs Dracott is equally uninformative. Some of her tales, she says, came from 'down country'; others were taken down 'in pencil just as they were told and as nearly as possible in the words of the narrators, who were village women belonging to the agricultural class of Hindus in the Simla District'. This statement gives us confidence in the integrity of Mrs Dracott's tales, but it would have been more useful to have had more exact information about her sources. Day and Dracott, however, seem positively loquacious when compared to Shaik Chillî, who published his *Folk-Tales of Hindustan*

without a word to indicate from what part of the sub-continent they were drawn. All we are told is that they were narrated by village folk and are given 'with small omissions and alterations to suit the needs of juvenile readers'. Ramaswami Raju, obviously a writer of some distinction, presents a book of a hundred Indian fables, of whose origin he can say no more than that 'a few have long had a standing in the literature of India though in a slightly different garb. The rest may be said to have been derived from original sources'. M'Culloch obtained his Bengali tales from 'a very intelligent young Brahmin', 'of a decidedly refined and distinguished type of mind', an orthodox Hindu 'whose home was in an extremely out-of-the-way village'. The excellently told stories of Shovona Devi, a niece of Rabindranath Tagore, have no indication of their origin except that they were told 'by various illiterate village folks, and not a few by a blind man' in the authoress's service. Bradley-Birt's *Bengal Fairy Tales* gives no hint as to from what part of Bengal they were derived, but says that some of the stories were told by 'Bhabaghuray, the traveller'. Mackenzie's *Indian Fairy Stories* suffers not only from the fact that the author gives no indication whatever of his sources, but because where these can be traced, it is evident that he has altered the original text. A small book called *Indian Folklore* by G. Jethabhai, published in Limbdi in 1903, gives stories which were apparently collected in Gujerati villages and was first published in Gujerati. Here again we are left completely in the dark as to the type of people who told the tales or when, where, and how they were collected. Nothing more vividly illustrates the older attitude to folk-tale literature than the fact that Temple in the Introduction to his *Legends of the Panjab*, when giving his method of work with admirable frankness, feels that he has to apologize for doing so, for fear that it should savour 'too much of egotism'. Today, not only egotism but a general confession is demanded of the ethnographer or folklorist.

Another serious fault that runs right through our folk-tale collection is the habit of bowdlerisation. Sir Richard Temple started the process by omitting from Hislop's version of the Lingo story everything that was 'redundant, frivolous, improper, or objectionable', whereby 'the original whole was pared down to about one half'. It is remarkable that the collection of folk-tales should have been regarded in India as a suitable pastime for the clergy and for English ladies.

Thus we owe our chief Bengal collection to the Rev. L. B. Day, our Santal collection to the Rev. O. Bodding and the Rev. A. Campbell, our Kashmir stories to the Rev. J. H. Knowles, another important collection to the Rev. C. Swynerton. Among ladies we have Miss Frere, Miss Stokes, Miss Thornhill. Mrs Steel, Mrs Dracott and several others. This has meant inevitably that the stories recorded are only those fit for clerical or lady-like ears. This is not perhaps altogether to be regretted, but it has meant that a very one-sided picture of the true state of affairs has been presented to the world. Mrs Dracott in her Introduction to *Simla Village Tales* says naively, 'In one or two instances I was asked if I would allow a Paharee man, well versed in local folk-lore, to relate a few stories to me; but, for obvious reasons, I was obliged to decline the offer, for many Simla Village tales related to me by women, and *not* included in this book, were grotesquely unfit for publication.' Campbell admits that 'in translating he has allowed himself considerable latitude' and has omitted all 'expressions and allusions unfitted for ears polite.' Parker, who was formerly an official of the Irrigation Department of Ceylon, makes the astonishing claim that 'in the case of stories like these, composed for the amusement of villagers only, and related by villagers to other villagers, it must be expected that a considerable number of objectionable expressions would occur. So far from this being the fact, I am able to state with much satisfaction that in only three or four instances in this volume has it been thought desirable to slightly modify any part of the stories.' I cannot believe that the villagers of Ceylon are so entirely different from farmers and peasants in every other quarter of the globe. No one could desire, of course, that the exquisite pages of *Old Deccan Days* should be defiled by the bawdy humour of the clod-hopper or the obscene hiccoughs of the drunkard, but there are many other collections which are obviously not intended for universal consumption (such as the Santal and Ceylon collections) from which the rough, coarse, indecent humour which so vividly characterises the speech and thought of the villager should not have been omitted.

Norman Brown has pointed out that in some cases authors have not been sufficiently careful in excluding from their presentation of folk-tales those which have been translated directly from literary texts. 'Those who have so offended

are for the most part natives of the country. Pandit S. M. Natesa Sastri, for example, offers forty-five stories in his collection. One of these which appears as No 13 in *Tales of the Sun*, is in reality no oral tale, but a translation of the *Alakesakatha*, a sixteenth century Tamil romance published by him in two other places as a piece of literature. Other of his tales are evidently literary, as for instance No 3, "The Soothsayer's Son." How many more are of this character I cannot say. The same remark applies to some of the stories found in Mr G. R. Subramiah Pantalu's *Folklore of the Telugus*, of which, for instance, No 41 is a translation of the entire first book of the *Hitopadesa* in some Telugu version. There is also a suspicious ring to many of Mr Ramaswami Raju's *Indian Fables*, some of which seem to be taken directly from literature, or if oral to have been "doctored" by the compiler. The only European, as far as I know, who has done this is the Rev. A. Wood.¹ As the second part of his *In and Out of Chanda*, he publishes five stories which are called "a valuable contribution to our knowledge of Indian folklore." Four of these are probably translations from some Hindustani version of the *Tutinameh*; they are at least good paraphrases of the Persian. The other is a translation of the *Vetalpancavimsati* story of Saṅkacuda and Jimutavhana, taken, apparently, from a modern vernacular version'.²

Finally, the translation of many of the collections is either so literal as to be almost unreadable or so written up and elaborated that it is hard to regard it as having any real relation to the original. Sarat Chandra Roy's versions are the most tiresomely literal, so often are Parker's. It is the purpose of an author to be read, and this will not be possible if his text is full of italics and brackets. At the extreme opposite end of literary method there are the charmingly told tales of F. A. Steel who manages to produce in each of her stories something that could stand entirely on its own as a fresh and original folk-tale. This is vividly illustrated in her version of 'The Tiger, the Brahman and the Jackal' which is far and away the best account of this widely spread motif. But it has become a charming English story.

'So they came to where the tiger was waiting for the Brahmin, and sharpening his teeth and claws.

¹ Later Anglican Bishop of Nagpur.

² W. N. Brown, 'The *Panchatantra* in Modern Indian Folklore', *J.A.O.S.*, xxxix, 3.

"You've been away a long time", growled the beast, "But now let us begin *our* dinner".

"Our dinner!" thought the Brahmin as his knees knocked together with fright; "What a very delicate way of putting it".

"Give me five minutes, my lord", he pleaded, "in order that I may explain matters to the jackal here, who is somewhat slow in his wits"

This is delightful, but it is not village India. In other cases we find authors introducing new images and ideas that are alien to the thought of the people, as where P. D. H. Wadia describes two cheats discovering that there was 'no more scope for the exercise of their talents in their native village; so they resolve upon going out to seek fresh fields and pastures new'. In a Ho folk-tale Sukumar Haldar translates, 'During the first night of his honeymoon the unpretentious little hut was transformed mysteriously into a magnificent palace.'¹ The Ho do not have the institution of the honeymoon. The same author again, describing a fox who comes home and finds that her children have been killed by a bear makes her exclaim, 'You have taken advantage, Bruin, of my absence and slaughtered the dear innocents. You will have to rue for this'.² Day speaks far too often of people suffering from 'constitutional indolence',³ or having 'a stately demeanour'⁴ or finding that 'when life was extinct, the case was beyond their jurisdiction'.⁵

Even this, however, is better than what I call the Old Testament method of representing the Indian villager where everybody speaks in the second person singular as if they were Patriarchs in the *Book of Genesis*. It is perfectly true that the Indian villager does speak in the second person singular and uses 'thou' to everyone with whom he is familiar. But the 'thou' in English has precisely the opposite effect; it has become the mark of respect, not of familiarity.

Of all the translations, I regard those by Bompas and Mills as the best, clear, straightforward, readable, without the introduction of a single jarring note. Long residence among the people does give one, I think, an instinct which immediately reacts against anything recorded of them that would be unnatural, and while I find myself constantly in a state of reaction

¹ *J.B.O.R.S.*, ii, 296.

² Day, 64.

⁴ *Ibid*, 144.

² *J.B.O.R.S.*, iv, 322.

⁵ *Ibid*, 50.

when reading many, for example, of the stories in *The Indian Antiquary*, I never feel it with Bompas and Mills.

The stories collected in this volume have been translated on the Bompas-Mills model; most of them have been taken directly from eastern Hindi or Chhattisgarhi. The Bastar tales were told first in Gondi, then translated, generally by the people themselves, into Halbi or Chhattisgarhi and then into English. I have tried to treat all the stories as if I were translating poetry; that there should be no extra words, no fresh images, no alien ideas. Every story has been tested against the background of the ethnographic monographs and there is nothing inconsistent between this book and those.

In each case I have given the name of the village and the tribe of the narrator. This does not mean that the story is confined to that particular tribe or indeed known to every member of it. The tales are generally the property of an area rather than of a tribe; that is why I have combined tales from many different peoples in one collection.

I have avoided bowdlerization as much as possible. This has been made easier by the fact that the very interesting series of twenty-four tales belonging to the Vagina Dentata cycle has been published elsewhere.¹ Other tales illustrating the social and sexual aspects of aboriginal life occur in my other books, so do myths, place-legends and aetiological legends. I give a list of these stories, together with a list of all the folk tales from the Central Provinces that are available in the English language, in an Appendix. The fact that a good many of the tales that have sociological importance are recorded elsewhere means that it would not be possible to emulate from the stories in this book the example of Boas, who in his 'Description of the Tsimshian based upon their Mythology' builds up a picture of the people including villages and houses, property and manufacture, dress and ornament, food-gaining, games, social organization, marriage and death, religion and magic and ethical ideas. Among our aboriginals, however, the majority of the tales are as remote from ordinary life as they can make them. I am doubtful how far any of the Indian collections would have 'the merit of bringing out those points which are of interest to the people themselves and present in a way an autobiography of the tribe'.² Nor could we

¹ See *The British Journal of Medical Psychology*, xix, 439-53.

² F. Boas, 'Description of the Tsimshian based upon their Mythology', *Thirty-first Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 1909-1, 393-477.

gather anything of the ethical ideas of the people from their folk-tales as Boas did in America. The most honest and strictly moral people, the Maria and Muria, delight in tales of murder, trickery and lust.

I have confined myself to giving Indian parallels, and references in the main to studies of Indian themes, partly because to survey the entire realm of scholarship would be impossible to one living in the jungle five hundred miles from any large library, and partly because I think I am better employed in adding to the literature than in commenting upon it. Scholarly comment on the Indian folk-tale is out of all proportion to its subject matter. The most brilliant minds are exercised upon the works of Shaik Chilli and Jethabhai. Until we get a body of tales of a much higher standard it will be impossible to regard the comment upon them as being finally authoritative. The most obvious omission, which I greatly regret, is that I have been unable to classify the tales according to the Aarne-Thompson method. This book was prepared in India during the war. Two letters to England in search of a copy of *The Types of the Folk-Tale* were destroyed by enemy action. No copy of the book was to be obtained from any of the main Indian libraries, nor was it possessed privately by any of the scholars known to me. When communications between Europe and India become easier, I hope to repair this omission by printing a small Supplement.

The form and style of the tales told in central India varies. Some of them are what we can call prose, straightforward narrative which is recited with a wealth of gesture and expression, but in which no particular variations are introduced. In other tales certain parts of the dialogue are sung. The phrases become rhythmical and are chanted to a simple tune. Not all the dialogue in any particular story is thus put to music but certain special phrases and expressions. It is interesting that the tradition of singing parts of the story remains attached to it when it migrates to other areas. Thus in the Mandla tale of Kajal the Fish, certain portions of the dialogue are sung and the same portions are sung in a Santal variant. So too wherever songs of a girl being sacrificed to bring water from a tank are told, the dialogue appears to be sung.

Cumulative tales are told with great vigour and excitement; but these are rare. In the Bastar Ghotul story-telling has naturally become a fine art and no one is likely to forget the experience of listening to one of the Ghotul Pata tales which are often either in verse or a sort of rhythmic prose and chanted to a

recognizable tune. The most remarkable that I have heard was a long and rambling Ghotul Pata chanted by Dasru of the Markabera Ghotul. Dasru sat in the middle of the room, a little group of boys near him, the other chelik and motiari reclining near. He sat very upright and sang with great animation, gesticulating with his hands and the boys near him joined in a chorus and beat the ground with little sticks.

I heard another beautifully sung story in the Masora Ghotul. This was the tale of the Ogre and the Little Girl; the boy who knew it was a very small boy, the Anter. He and a friend sang in a curious shrill falsetto and the whole Ghotul joined in the chorus—

*Rāi sarso sarso phūl nunikē nāngar gurdūm—
gurdūm gurdūm gurdūm.*

*Rākas bukas barma bhūt des nuni kuchi kewar—
gurdūm gurdūm gurdūm.*

The story was chanted in a kind of rhythm, while the beat of the chorus was irresistible, the boys booming grandly on the *gurdūm*.

Sometimes the narrative of the tale is in 'prose' and is recited in the ordinary speaking voice, and the dialogue is sung, occasionally in rhymed couplets. The boys and girls sit round listening with great attention, and nod their heads saying, 'Hingo, Yes', at the right moments.

Tales do not seem to be the property of individuals as in some other cultures, though very often a certain person is associated with the telling of a certain tale. Nor have I found any idea that the telling of tales has magic virtue as Russell records of the Korwa who recite certain tales on the eve of a hunt believing that it will bring success.¹

There is one class of tale, however, that must have special mention. The Pardhan are the official minstrels of the Gond tribe; they are in fact a branch of the great Gond family, and in their myths say that their founder was the youngest of the original seven Gond brothers; they share the life of the Gond, often act as their priests—there is a Pardhan priest at the famous shrine of Lingo at Semurgaon, and it was a Pardhan priest who first recounted the Lingo legend to the Rev. Stephen Hislop—have the same clans, and have entirely similar social and religious observances. But they do not intermarry and though the Pardhan may eat from a Gond kitchen, the Gond is forbidden to accept his younger brother's food.

¹ Russell and Hiralal, iii, 578.

The Pardhan have the right to visit Gond houses of the same sept as themselves, and to sing and beg there. There are several kinds of gifts that Gond are expected to give to their Pardhan clan-members. The most pleasant of these is the Suk Dan, which is given when a Pardhan minstrel comes to the house. Then there is Sonne Dan, which is given by the clansman's eldest daughter. Bhacha Dan is given when the eldest daughter has her first son. When she grows old, they give Budha Dan, an expensive gift of a cow. When a Gond dies the Pardhan may claim any ornaments left on the body as well as a present; this is known as Muar Dan.

The Pardhan minstrel, who is known in Mandla as the Dasondhi or 'visitor to ten doors', goes on his singing and begging tour in the three months of Phag, Chait and Baisakh, or roughly from February to April, after the crops have been gathered and before the serious work of the new season has begun. The tour is undertaken seriously and with due ceremonial. The Dasondhi prepares his *bāna*, the sacred fiddle which is the home of Bara Deo, and makes offerings to his household gods before he sets out. When he comes to the house of a Gond member of his own sept, he waits at the door until the eldest son's wife (or woman in a similar relationship) comes out and fills his pot with water. With this he washes his feet and is received by the family as one of themselves. He feeds with them and they exchange the usual gossip and enquiries.

Many of the villagers assemble, but women in their menstrual periods must be careful that their shadows do not fall across the sacred *bāna*. When the company is ready the Dasondhi begins to sing, accompanying himself on the *bāna*. His songs are epic tales of the old Gond Rajas and of such legendary figures as Mara Kshattri and Hirakhan Kshattri. I have given prose translations of several in Chapter II. A very important element in the tales is their humour; this generally centres round the antics of the village Kotwar (watchman), a post held either by Panka and Ganda or by the Pardhan themselves.

If the Dasondhi sings well, he is well received; otherwise the villagers tease him and bother him all night long. They prick him with thorns and throw fire on him while he is asleep, then he is doused with water and dragged round the yard. The following morning, he sits in the middle of the court and the wife of the house brings kodon millet in a winnowing-fan.

Hidden in the grain is a rupee, and two pice as witnesses that the rupee was given. The Pardhan pretends to be very disappointed at only getting two pice, and the time-honoured joke never seems to fail. Then the *bāna* is placed on the grain and the woman takes three handfuls of it—now blessed by the sacred instrument—back to the store and gives three other handfuls instead.

The Pardhan tales are among the best in the book, and are told with remarkable vigour, humour and artistic power.

Linguists will regret that the originals of the stories are not given. To this there is only one answer. It is difficult enough for a publisher to handle a book of this kind when everything is in English; if its size is doubled and the range of its appeal halved by the inclusion of a great quantity of material which will be studied only by a handful of scholars, publication becomes impractical. Moreover, in central India the situation is different from that which, for example, faced Boas when he prepared his *Chinook Texts*. At that time the dialects of the lower Chinook 'were on the verge of disappearing and only a few individuals survived who remembered the languages of the once powerful tribes of the Clatsop and Chinook'.¹ In central India Eastern Hindi, Chhattisgarhi and Halbi are still living languages spoken by millions of people; even Gondi is known to something like two million aboriginals. Linguistics must, I think, on purely practical grounds connected with the technique of book production, be studied separately.

These tales have been collected gradually over a period of ten years' residence in the Maikal Hills and Bastar State. During this time I have undertaken many lengthy tours in the wilder hills and forests. My purpose was never primarily to collect folk-tales or songs. This was incidental to my main task of ethnographic enquiry, though I have always considered that the light thrown on anthropological problems by both stories and poetry is of the greatest importance. No words can express the debt I owe to my friend, Mr Shamrao Hivale, for his company, encouragement and active assistance, through these years. His help has been perhaps more evident in other books than in this, but this too would have made small progress without the atmosphere of friendliness and self-revelation which he invariably creates among the aboriginals. Mr Ram Bharose Agarwal, an influential pleader and landlord of Mandla, one

¹ F. Boas, *Chinook Texts* (Washington, 1894), 5-

of the few who is always on the side of the aboriginal, has given freely of his wide knowledge and experience of the people of the District. In this book, as in my other works, I have had the constant help of Sunderlal and Gulabdas, my trained assistants, as also of two Gond helpers, Kartik Maswasi in Mandla and Dhanuram Usendi in Bastar. Mr Sampat Singh wrote down two stories in Gondi for me and helped to interpret many others.

I am grateful to Mr W. V. Grigson for permission to reprint one story from his *Maria Gonds of Bastar*. I have reproduced two stories from *Songs of the Forest* by Shamrao Hivale and myself, two others from *Phulmat of the Hills*, one from *A Cloud that's Dragonish* and two from *The Baiga*. To Messrs Allen and Unwin and Messrs John Murray respectively I make the fullest acknowledgements. One tale has been reproduced from Sterndale's *Seoni*. The quotation on page viii is from F. Garcia Lorca's *Poems*, translated by Stephen Spender and J. L. Gili (Dolphin Press, London, 1942).

No student of Indian folklore can avoid contracting (in the true manner of an aboriginal) a debt that he can never repay to Penzer's edition of the *Katha Sarit Sagara*. I have never regretted what seemed to me at the time the most daring of extravagances, that of spending £5 at Foyles on these ten magnificent volumes. My other debt is to American scholarship, to Maurice Bloomfield, Norman Brown, Ruth Norton, M. B. Emeneau, which instituted an entirely new approach to the study of the Indian folk-tale and introduced precision and exactitude into a subject that has in the past been too often marked by vagueness. Bloomfield's great scheme for producing an Encyclopaedia of Indian fiction has been delayed by his death and the confusion and turmoil of war, but when peace comes again and scholars are free to devote their attention once more to such matters, I trust the present volume may make its contribution to the great Encyclopaedia that is slowly coming into being.

Part of the expense of research was covered by a grant from Merton College, and I am most grateful to the Warden and Fellows for their assistance. The Government of the Central Provinces and Berar contributed towards the publication of the book, as did the Darbar of Baster State. My ally, Mr Jehangir P. Patel helped me at every stage by his support and interest. The dedication to Sir Sorab and Lady Saklatvala

is an expression not only of my personal affection for two very dear friends, but of my gratitude to the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust of which Sir Sorab is Chairman. This Trust made possible the publication of *The Baiga*. It has given its support to the present volume and it has made a munificent contribution towards the heavy cost of my forthcoming work, *The Muria and their Ghotul*.

I must finally express my appreciation of the great care and forbearance of the staff of the Oxford University Press at Madras and Bombay, and the admirable work of the Diocesan Press, Madras, which carried through the printing in spite of flood and air-raid.

PATANGARH
MANDLA DISTRICT
INDIA
1 May 1944

VERRIER ELWIN

THE QUEST FOR LOVE AND TREASURE

IN this Chapter I group a number of adventure tales, of varied pattern, but mostly concerned with a quest for love or treasure which involves ordeals to be overcome. The first three stories are concerned with a hero's search for some object of shining beauty, a motif that seems to go back ultimately to the *Jataka* story (No. 159) of the Golden Peacock, which lived on a golden hill conferring immortality on all who ate its flesh.

The quest in Story 1 has a marked humanitarian element. The medicinal side of the quest is found also in a Bengali legend of the Silver Tree,¹ where a Raja has a dream, goes blind and, just as in our story, goes to his 'house of anger' and refuses to speak till his sons are persuaded to go to find the tree which alone can cure him. His despised lame son insists on going with his brothers, and finds the tree at the bottom of a deep well, just as the Shining Goat is at the bottom of a great pit. The Bengali hero also finds a city of Rakshasas. As in our story the brothers try to kill the hero, but at last he wins through to safety and the Raja is cured.

In a story reported from Ceylon,² the Raja simply desires the jewelled Golden Cock and offers half his kingdom and an elephant's load of treasure to whoever brings it to him. In another tale, the Raja summons the Vedda and bids them bring him the Golden Peacock on pain of banishment.³ In a story from Western India, preserved in the verbose periods of P. D. H. Wadia, the quest is for a Shining Tree which is composed of four fairies who are transformed in and out of it at will.⁴ Shovona Devi has a Raja who collects exotic birds. He sends his sons to find a Golden Parrot. The youngest finds it but is pushed down a well.⁵ Our Stories 2 and 3 are concerned with the search for a Golden Bird, but there is no humanitarian or medicinal motive here. The quest is rather an ordeal, for the heroes are sent out on pain of death by a Raja who desires the prize. In both these stories, the heroes are helped by birds and animals.

¹ Trans. by G. H. Damant in *The Indian Antiquary*, i (1872), 115-120. Cf. Macculloch, 61.

² Parker, i, 67.

³ Ibid, ii, 421 ff.

⁴ Trans. by P. D. H. Wadia in *The Indian Antiquary*, xix (1890), 152 ff.

⁵ Devi, 29 ff.

Stories 4 to 12 are really love stories. Where love is so accessible and free as it is in most of the aboriginal areas of India, tales of frustration, for this is what the quest and ordeal stories really are, have a special appeal. It is rare indeed for a Gond or Baiga boy to suffer the pangs of despised love or to be forced to search for months or years to win the hand of his bride. But the very idea of such a search and such frustration fills him with delight. So in Story 4 the hero loses his wife as a result of his own jealous conduct and, when she is lost, discovers his real love for her and goes out to find her. With the help of a magic horse he at last discovers her in a fisherman's house and after a great battle with a lustful Raja regains her love and company.

Story 5 is from the Ghotul area in North Bastar and is on the familiar theme of a maiden who lives inside a fruit.¹ The maiden here is a motiari and the story is complicated by characteristic touches which illustrate Muria dormitory life. The pomegranate maiden's romance with the hero is interrupted by a party of boys and girls from the Ghotul of the under-world coming to demand her attendance according to the rules. The hero, assisted by a Sadhu, goes down and rescues her just as she is about to be married with full Muria ceremonial. The Sadhu who, as so often in the folk-tales, is a thoroughly bad lot, himself tries to abduct the girl, but after many adventures the hero triumphs. Story 6 is another Ghotul Pata tale and this, as is commonly the case, is mainly concerned with the arrangements for the hero's marriage. A note of humour is introduced by the account of the enormous meals eaten by the bridegroom's emissaries. As in Bastar today, chelik and motiari arrange the business of the ceremonial and escort the married pair to their new home.

Stories 7 to 11 are short and two at least are incomplete, but I have included them for all have points of interest. Story 7 appears to be very condensed, and is little more than a number of familiar incidents strung together, though the idea of a bazaar coming out of a girl's body is fresh and interesting. Story 8 also contains many familiar incidents on which I have written separate notes. Story 9 is another account of a search for a missing wife with the help of friendly animals. Stories 10 and 11 both appear fragmentary; the second tale perhaps

¹ Cf., for example, Dracott, 226 (pomegranate); Frere, 96 (mango); Stokes, 138 (bael fruit); Bompas, 461 (bael fruit). In a *Jataka* tale, No. 380, a girl is rewarded for her merit by being born in a lotus flower.

suggests the manner in which the vengeance demanded in the first was achieved.

Story 12 is a long and interesting tale of a struggle between a youth Jangralal against a ruling prince. As in stories from all over the area, the boy has an animal brother from the same mother. In this case it is a bull which is the magic provider of everything, and lays down its own life for the sake of its family. In this tale the dialogue is sung throughout. Contests between a bull and a Raja occur several times in our stories and may go back to the *Jataka* story (No. 28) of the bull which wins a bet of two thousand pieces of gold for its master, the Brahmin, by dragging a hundred carts at once. The Santal tale of 'The Oilman's Bullock' is also about a man who matches his bullock against the Raja's elephant for a prize of five hundred rupees.¹ Here the tale is on the purely natural plane; the elephant has to fight without a mahout on its back and gets frightened and runs away when the bullock snorts and blows through its nose. The bullock chases it and gores it until it trumpets with pain. The tale of Jangralal is on a very different level, and undoubtedly has a strong Hindu propaganda element intended to show the virtues of the sacred bull Nandia. Yet it has many elements that are primitive and it is a characteristic oral tale of the countryside.

The two Bison-horn Maria tales, from a much more primitive element in the population, repeat many of the familiar motifs, but each is charming in its way.

I

THE TALE OF THE SHINING GOAT

A Muria story from Kongera, Bastar State

There was once a city and it was of this kind. It had eighty lakhs of roofs, and the people lived on kotri fish and lemon juice. There the armless jostled one another in the streets; there the hairless rubbed bald pates against each other; there the eyeless held rupees before them; the noseless sniffed at flowers; in the middle of the street the bazaar was held, and the Raja held his court sitting on chirota plants. In this city none but crooked poles were used. In this city there was a Raja.

¹ Bompas, 100.

That Raja had seven Ranis; each Rani had one son. For some reason, the Raja sent away the youngest. She went to live with her baby in the stables.

After some time, the Raja's two eyes broke open and he became blind. At that very time Rusi Bairagi came down from the Asakban Mountains and lit his fire on the seashore. As he did his penance there the white ants built their hill around him, till nothing could be seen but his face.

One day one of the Raja's women-servants went to the sea to bathe. When Rusi saw her he cried, 'O woman!' She looked hither and thither but could not see him. She said, 'Who is that calling? I can't see you. Where are you?' Rusi replied, 'I am sitting here, you can see my face.' At last the girl saw him and went to him. He asked what town it was, and she said that it was the great city of the Raja. 'Here are seven parganas and eighteen forts; here is the Raja of twenty kos.' But the Bairagi said, 'What kind of Raja is this? I have been here all this time, and he has not once done puja for me. You go and tell your Raja that Rusi Bairagi has come from the Asakban Mountains. Tell him that if he calls me to his Palace I will give him medicine to open his eyes.'

Hearing this, the girl quickly finished her bath and went to tell the Raja. The Raja sent his elephants and horses to the sea-shore to fetch Rusi Bairagi. The servants poured seven pots of hot water and seven pots of cold water over him and thus washed away the earth that covered his body. Then they brought him to the Palace and he was received with great honour. When the Raja asked him about a cure for his eyes, Rusi said, 'You have seven sons: send them to fetch medicine for you.' But the Raja said, 'No, they can't fetch me medicine, they will never do it.' Rusi said, 'Then don't eat anything; go and lie down in a corner, and don't get up till they promise to fetch you your medicine. On the Kajliban Mountains,¹ went on the Bairagi, 'there is a Shining Goat, whose skin blazes like fire. Let them catch this goat and bring it here, and from its liver your eyes will be healed.'

The Raja did as Rusi bade him, and his six sons were moved to set out in search of the Shining Goat. But the seventh son said to

¹ The Kajliban is a name given to any dense forest, black as kajal, the lamp-black with which women beautify their eyes. In local tradition, the Kajliban Forest is the home of wild elephants.

his mother, 'Mother, my six brothers have gone; I must go too.' His mother said, 'Son, don't go with them, they'll beat you.' But the boy took no notice; he armed himself with a broken sword and on a broken-down hack went after his brothers. When the brothers saw him, they began to abuse him and wanted to kill him. But the eldest brother said, 'No, he is our brother. Let him be. We can make him work for us. He can water the horses.'

At last the brothers reached the Kajliban Mountains where the Shining Goat was grazing. They surrounded it and tried to catch it, but it broke through their ring and went down through a hole in the earth and disappeared.

The brothers gathered round the hole and wondered what to do. No one could think of a plan, but the youngest said, 'Let us send for all the men from our Raj and tell them to bring picks and shovels and make a deep pit here.' They called great numbers of men and dug a pit down into the earth until all the picks and spades were broken and the men worn out with weariness and they said, 'We can dig no more.'

Then the eldest brother asked the others, 'What shall we do now?' But they could not answer him, until at last the youngest boy said, 'Send these men into the jungle to cut bark and make a great rope and let it down into the pit.' First the eldest brother went down the rope, but the pit was full of snakes and scorpions and he came up again. In this way the six elder brothers each went down into the pit, and each shouted, 'Pull me up quickly', for they were afraid of being killed. Finally the youngest brother went down, and at once all the snakes, scorpions, tigers and bears ran away. The boy found a beautiful road running under the earth, and he went along it till he came to where Ambavati was swinging in a golden swing.

The boy thought, 'If I go and stand before her, perhaps she will curse me,' so he hid behind the pillar of the swing. But as Ambavati was swinging to and fro, she saw his shadow and cried, 'Here is the shadow of the swing, and here the shadow of the pillar.' She counted the shadows, but there was one too many. Then she said, 'Is this a bhut, or a pret, or a massan, or a churelin? Come out,' she called, 'or I will curse you and you will turn to ashes.'

Then the boy came out of his hiding-place and stood before her. Ambavati said, 'Where have you come from? If my mother sees you, she will surely eat you.' So saying she took the boy to her

Palace and after bathing him with seven pots of hot water and seven pots of cold, made him sit on a bed and gave him sweet bread to eat. An iron grain-bin was standing there and when the time came for her mother's return she hid him in it.

Ambavati's mother was a Rakshasin. When she came in she roared 'Man-smell! Man-smell!' The girl said, 'Man-smell! Man-smell! What's this about man-smell? Now I'm twelve years old, don't you know I have a man-smell?' Her mother said, 'Well, I can't eat you, so I'll eat my own hands and feet instead.' She went on, 'I've been trying all day to find a nice man for you to marry.'

But Ambavati said, 'I don't like the sort of men you bring. You always bring men half-eaten. One had lost his hands, and the next one had had his feet eaten by you. One day you brought me a boy whose eyes you had eaten. If you'll promise not to eat him, I've got a boy I'd like to marry.' Her mother said, 'I'll never touch him.' So Ambavati brought the boy out of the grain-bin and when her mother saw him she was very pleased, and kissed him, and said to her daughter, 'Daughter, in twelve days I'll arrange your marriage. Get everything that we need, and I'll call your grandmother and grandfather.'

So the girl got busy and collected twelve-score buffaloes for the Rakshasas who would come to the marriage-feast, and made the marriage arrangements. Soon the guests assembled, and prepared the booth. Then the marriage was celebrated. At the time of tika, the girl said to the boy, 'Last of all my grandfather will put the tika, and he will say to you, "Anything you want I'll give you." You say that you want the old dhoti that he's wearing, and refuse a new one; take that old one.' So after all the others had put the tika on their foreheads, the old ogre came and asked the boy what he would like. The boy said, 'Give me your old dhoti'. The old man tried hard to give him something else, but the boy took no notice and at last forced his grandfather to give him the old dhoti.

Then there was a great feast on the twelve-score buffaloes, and the guests went home. Ambavati's mother also said, 'Well, children, I'm off. Enjoy yourselves.' And she went away. Ambavati and the boy lived together in great happiness for some days, and then the boy said, 'Now I've got to go somewhere.' She said, 'I'll come with you. Where do you want to go?' The boy told her about his blind father. The girl said, 'But how are you going to catch the

Shining Goat? Take my ring and on the way you will meet my sister Champavati. Show my ring to her and she will tell you everything.' So taking the ring, the boy went on his journey.

After some days he came to where Champavati was swinging in a golden swing, and he hid as before behind the pillar. Champavati too counted the shadows and cried out, 'Who is this? Come out or I'll curse you and you'll turn into ashes.' Then the boy came forward and threw Ambavati's ring before her. When she saw the ring, she said, 'So you're Ambavati's husband,' and took him into her house, and treated him with great honour. But before her mother came home, she hid him in an iron bin. When the old Rakshasin came in, she roared, 'Man-smell! Man-smell!' Champavati said, 'Man-smell! Don't you know that I'm twelve years old and smell of man? But you're right, Ambavati's husband has come here. Here he is!' So saying she brought him out and showed him to her mother.

The Rakshasin was eating gram; her gram was bits of iron which she chewed up. She said, 'If this is really Ambavati's husband, let him eat my gram; otherwise I'll eat him.' At that, the girl put some real gram in a pan and threw the iron gram on top of it and, showing it to her mother, quickly changed the real gram for the iron, and gave it to the boy. He sat down by the Rakshasin and began to eat the gram *charam charam*. When he had finished, the girl said, 'Look mother, he's eaten it all.' The Rakshasin was pleased and kissed the boy, and married him to Champavati.

After the marriage, the Rakshasin said, 'Well, children, I'm off. Enjoy yourselves.' And she went away. For some time they lived together and did enjoy themselves. Then the boy said, 'I must go to find the Shining Goat.' But the girl said, 'You can't find the Shining Goat easily. There will be bears and tigers and snakes on the road, and they will kill you. That Shining Goat lives with Mahapurub, so how will you catch it?' But the boy said, 'No, I'm going, I must find it.' The girl said, 'Take my ring, and show it to the bears and tigers and snakes, and when they see the ring, they won't hurt you. Then go to Phulmalin, and you will get the Shining Goat.'

The boy did as his girl told him, and when he reached Phulmalin, he said, 'O mother, O big mother!' She said, 'Who is this new son of mine?' The boy said, 'My mother told me that her elder sister was here, making garlands for Mahapurub's six daughters.'

He showed the ring to Phulmalin and she at once took him into her house. The next day she had fever, and said, 'Son, today I have fever and I won't be able to make the garlands for the daughters of Mahapurub, and they'll turn me out.' But the boy said, 'I'll make them for you' and he sat down and made six beautiful garlands, tying them up in leaf-cups.

When Phulmalin got well, she too made six garlands and took all twelve garlands to the daughters of Mahapurub. The boy had told Phulmalin to say that the other garlands had been made by her grand-daughter. The daughters of Mahapurub were very pleased and asked Phulmalin to bring her grand-daughter with her next time she came. The following day she dressed the boy in a sari and many ornaments, and took him there. The boy pretended to be very shy and covered his face. But Mahapurub's daughters were pleased and asked Phulmalin to leave her grand-daughter with them for two or four days.

So Phulmalin left the boy there and went home. Daily the boy cleaned the house and spread the bedding for Mahapurub's daughters. These girls used to stay indoors all day and in the evening would sit in their flying chariot and go to visit Mahapurub, and dance before him. They said to him, 'We are going away, but don't go out towards the sunrise or towards the sunset.' When he found they had gone, he went first towards the sunset. By the house on that side was a boat. When the boat saw this boy, it said, 'You son of a forsaken Rani, why have you come here? Don't touch me or I will be defiled. First sprinkle the water of immortality on your feet and touch them with the magic wand.' The boy looked and there by the boat was the water of immortality and the magic wand. He did as the boat said and sat in the boat which rose at once into the air and took him to his mother and father. The boy flew round the kingdom and returned to the house.

The boy got out of the boat, cleaned the house as usual and once more sat down dressed and looking like a girl. When the daughters of Mahapurub returned from watching the dance, they said, 'How well you have swept the house today!' And they said to each other, 'We can't let her go, she must stay with us.' Again that evening, after they had bathed and supped, they went to Mahapurub. The day before, the boy had found a boat on the west side of the house; now what would he find if he went to the east side? When he went

there, he found a chariot. The chariot said to him, 'You son of a forsaken Rani, why have you come here? Don't touch me or I will be defiled.' Then it said, 'If you want to touch me, first sprinkle the water of immortality on your feet and touch them with the magic wand.' The boy did as he was bidden and sat in the chariot.

At once the chariot rose into the air and flew away to where the boy's six brothers were sitting at the mouth of the pit. He flew round them and they saw him clearly; then the chariot took him and showed him to Ambavati and then to Champavati and at last brought him back to the house. The boy got out of the chariot, and swept the house, then sat down again dressed and looking like a girl.

The six girls came back from Mahapurub's house, and said, 'What a good girl this is! How well she keeps our house!' Then Phulmalin came, and the six girls said to her, 'Your grand-daughter is so good that we want to keep her.' Phulmalin went away, and the girls sat in the house during the day. In the evening they sat in their chariot, but the boy caught hold of it from below and was carried up with them to the Palace of Mahapurub.

The girls got out of the chariot and went to see Mahapurub. The boy followed them secretly and hid behind the door. There the six girls danced before Mahapurub. When the singing was done, the boy cleared his throat. This he did three times, until at last Mahapurub heard it and called, 'Who is there?' At that the boy came out and stood before him with hands folded saying, 'O Mahapurub, the dance is perfect, only the tabla-beater has forgotten how to do it.' Mahapurub said, 'If that is so, then you beat the tabla in his place.' When he sat down to beat the drum, suddenly they were all carried up into the sky four jhojan¹ high. Then down they came again. The girls cried, 'We are tired, we can't dance any more.' 'Very well,' said Mahapurub to the boy, 'You have done very well. Ask for any gift you want and I will give it to you.'

'O Mahapurub,' said the boy. 'I have already many of your gifts, a kingdom, rule and many treasures. I don't need anything.' 'No', said Mahapurub, 'ask for something.' 'Will you then give me

¹ *Jhojan*, Sanskrit *Yojan*, is a measure of 4 kos. A Gondi kos is 3 or more miles. Such measures are generally vague: a Baiga once defined a kos as 'the distance between one pipe and the desire for another': it is also said that if a Gond takes a leaf in his hand he knows he has travelled a kos when he sees it begin to curl.

anything?' asked the boy. 'Will you truly?' He asked three times, and Mahapurub promised.

Then the boy said, 'First I desire the Shining Goat.' 'And then?' asked Mahapurub. 'Then I desire your six daughters in marriage.' 'That is very little,' said Mahapurub. 'Ask for some more.' But the boy said, 'No that is all I want.' 'I have given them to you,' said Mahapurub.

The six girls got into their chariot, and the boy caught hold of it below, and they went down again to their house. While the girls went to another room to change their garments, the boy quickly took the form of a girl and putting on his ornaments lay down on a bed and slept.

When the girls came into the house, they found it was still unswept and they said, 'Perhaps Phulmalin's grand-daughter has run away.' But then they saw her on the bed, and they ran to her and pulled her up. The boy got up yawning, and said, 'O elder sister, why have you woken me? I was watching a beautiful dream.' At once the six girls cried, 'Tell us the dream, tell us the dream.' 'No, it's not fit for you to hear.' 'But you must tell us, do tell us.' Then the boy told his story from the very beginning, all about his father, and Rusi Bairagi, and Ambavati and the Rakshasin and his coming to that place and how Mahapurub had given him them all as his wives. So saying he showed them Ambavati's ring and Champavati's.

At once the six girls brought six pots of hot water and six pots of cold and bathed the boy and dressed him in fine clothes. Then they all seven sat in the chariot and flew away to Mahapurub for the Shining Goat and his blessing. When they got back to the house, they left the chariot and went on foot to see Champavati.

They stayed with Champavati for a little time, and then they loaded all she had on carts and bullocks and taking her with them went on their way to Ambavati. Here the boy thought, 'There are seven of us brothers, and here are seven girls. I won't take Ambavati, or I will have to keep two wives.' So thinking he tried to escape from Ambavati's place without her seeing him. But she had been watching the road for him and when he came near she saw him and ran and caught him by the hand crying, 'Why are you trying to go by so secretly? Have you forgotten me?' But the boy said,

'I have never forgotten you. It was for you I was coming so quickly. But I had forgotten the way.'

Ambavati took them all to her house, and they stayed for a time, and then they loaded all Ambavati's treasure onto carts and bullocks and went on their way. Now there were eight girls and one boy.

Who can say how many days they were on their journey? At last they came to the bottom of the great shaft where the rope was hanging down from the upper world. The boy tugged at the rope. The six brothers were waiting at the top and when they saw the rope twitch they knew their brother had come back. The boy tied their goods to the rope, and the six brothers pulled it up. So carts, horses and bullocks were sent up.

Then thought the boy, 'If my brothers see the Shining Goat, they will take it away and leave me here.' So he changed its form. He put its shining form in a box, and there it was just like an ordinary goat.

At last he sent the eight girls and the goat up by the rope. The brothers asked the girls, 'How much more is there?' They replied, 'There is just one boy left.'

The brothers said to one another, 'Here is that wretched fellow. If we bring him up, these things will be his. Let us divide the girls, a wife to each and three to the eldest, and all the things will be ours.' So they pulled the boy up half way and then dropped him. He was killed by that great fall and his bones were scattered in all directions. And the six brothers, taking the girls and the property, went off rejoicing to their city.

When they had got to within a day or two's journey of the city and had camped for the night, the eight girls discovered what had happened, and they told the brothers that they were under a curse that they should not see the faces of men for twelve years. 'Make us a separate house and we will live there for twelve years; then we will marry you. In the meantime, our treasure must be with us.'

So the brothers, sad and angry at this, had to make them a house by the sea-shore outside the city. From each house in turn, a man had to go nightly to sleep outside and guard.

The brothers went to the Raja saying that they had brought the Shining Goat and the blind man was pleased. 'We haven't the goat here; we killed it outside the city; but we have brought the liver.' So they said. They killed the goat and removed the liver—but it

was an immortal goat, only the youngest brother could kill it—and it ran away to graze after the liver was removed. The brothers took the liver and laid it on the Raja's eyes, but they only pained the more.

Now in the place where the boy had fallen and died, there was lying the old Rakshasa's dhoti which he had given the boy at his wedding. That dhoti was full of magic. It went round collecting the broken bones, and fitted them together, the hand where the hand should be, and the feet where the feet should be. When all was ready the dhoti laid itself above the skeleton, covering it from skull to feet. After a little while, the boy moved and crying, 'O Mahapurub!' got up. By now the dhoti had turned into a rope, and had climbed up into the air until it reached the top of the shaft. The boy went up the rope and sat on the top of the pit. The rope climbed out and turned into a horse.

The boy rode on the horse back to his own city. When he dismounted, the horse became a dhoti again, and the boy became covered with sores and patches. He put on the dhoti, and it at once became filthy and stinking; a swarm of flies settled on it. The boy now hobbled along to the house where the girls were living. Near by was a Muria's house. That Muria had no children. He had sown a lot of tobacco in his garden. He needed someone to guard it, so he employed the boy. When the day came for the Muria's turn to sleep on guard at the girls' house, the boy went instead.

When night fell, the girls called him to tell a story. He sat far from them because of his diseased body and told the whole story of what had happened. When they heard it, the girls began to cry, and they took him into the house, bathed him and clad him in fine clothes. They opened the box which had the Shining Goat's true form and made it ready for the Raja.

Then they went to the Raja and the boy asked him, 'O Raja, have your six sons brought you the medicine you wanted?' The Raja said, 'It was no medicine, it made me worse.' Then the boy told his father the whole story, and killed the goat and laid its liver on his eyes. The Raja at once was healed, and his eyes shone like the sun.

The boy said, 'We cannot stay here' and prepared to go away. But the Raja said, 'You must stay with me; how can I let you go?' 'No, as long as my brothers are living, I cannot stay.' So the Raja had the six brothers killed and buried. He took back into his house

the boy's mother whom he had driven away, and the boy married all eight girls and lived with them in great content.

2

THE GOLDEN BIRD

A Gond tale from Karanjia, Mandla District

A boy lived with his mother in a little hut. They were very poor and made a living by catching small birds with bird-lime. After a time the Raja heard of it and called the boy to his palace. 'Why are you killing all the birds in my kingdom?' said the Raja. 'Now you are to go and catch the Golden Bird, otherwise I will have you killed.'

The boy went home afraid and sad; he ate nothing, but sat silent in a corner. His mother asked him what was the matter, and the boy told her. She said, 'Do not be afraid, you will find the Golden Bird.' The boy was happy at hearing that and ate his food. Then he took bow and arrow, and set out to find the Golden Bird.

As he went he came to an aonra tree, and sat down to rest in its shade. In the branches of the tree was a wood-pigeon's nest. When she saw the boy, she cried, 'You have come after many days, son-in-law. We were watching the road for you, for my daughter is grown and ready. Come, hurry, and marry her.'

To this the boy replied, 'No, mother-in-law, I cannot marry now. On my way home we will have the wedding.' But the wood-pigeon said, 'It doesn't matter where you are going. We must have the marriage now.' At last the boy agreed.

The wood-pigeon sent out invitations to all her relatives, and on the wedding day the guests assembled in the tree. There were so many pigeons that they were like a roof in the sky, and in that shade the marriage was performed. After the marriage, at the time of salutations, the pigeon said, 'Go, son-in-law, go eat and live. If you have any trouble, come to me and I will help you.'

The boy stayed in his wife's house for a few days, and then said to his wife, 'Now I must go to catch the Golden Bird; you stay here, and on my way back I will come for you and take you home.' He bade farewell to his mother-in-law and went on his way.

As he went, he crossed one mountain, he crossed two mountains,

until he came to a lonely valley among rocky hills. There he found a spring and went to drink water. In the mud by the spring a pig and his sow were wallowing. The boy sat down by the spring and sighed. The sow cried, 'Why, son-in-law, you have arrived after many days. We were watching the road for you. My daughter is grown and eager for the marriage.' At first the boy refused saying he must be going, but when the pigs insisted he gave way.

The sow sent invitations to all her relatives, and when they came it was like a sea of black pigs around them. In the midst of this sea they were married.

The boy stayed in his wife's house for a few days and then declared, 'Now I must go for the Golden Bird; you stay here, and on my way back I will come for you and take you home.' He bade farewell to his mother-in-law and went his way.

He went by mountain and stream for many days till he came to the house of a Dano. Afar off the Dano saw him and ran to meet him. When he came near, he said to the boy, 'Welcome, son-in-law, welcome. You have done well to come. I was about to go to find you. My daughter is grown and eager for the marriage.' Once more the boy refused but the Dano took him on his back and carried him to his house.

When the Dano's wife saw the boy, she kissed him, saying, 'Son-in-law, you have done well to come. Our daughter has watched the road for you daily.' The boy stayed with them, and the Dano sent invitations to his relatives. He brought many cows and buffaloes for the feast. As the day approached, so many Dano-relatives came that it seemed as if the mountains were moving towards them. The bride said to the boy, 'Don't be afraid, but greet them all as your fathers-in-law. And when they kiss you, touch their feet.'

The boy did as his bride had said. All round it seemed as if they were surrounded by mountains, and in that place they were married. After the marriage, the Dano visitors had a great feast of beef.

The boy stayed in his wife's house for a time, and then he said that he must be going to find the Golden Bird. His wife said, 'You will never find it, it is too hard for you.' But the boy said, 'I must go.' So the girl told her father, and he said, 'Let him go, but tell him to take this axe with him.' And he handed her an axe. Then the Dano took the boy on his back and they went to find the Golden Bird.

As they journeyed, they came to the shores of the sea, and the Dano said, 'Look, son-in-law; over on the other side of the sea there is a cage hanging from a semur tree. In that cage are the two Golden Birds. But how will you cross the sea?' The boy looked and was frightened. The Dano said, 'Cut down all the trees you can see and stop me up with them.' When the boy had done this, the Dano put his mouth in the sea and drank it up. Because of the trees the water did not run out, and the sea dried up.

The boy crossed the sea and came to the semur tree and climbed up to the cage. He took it down and returned to the Dano. The Dano told him to put the cage at a safe distance and to pull out one or two of the trees. The boy did so and the water began to flow. 'Run for your life,' cried the Dano, and expelled the rest of the trees with a mighty effort so that the water came out in a great stream.¹ The boy returned home safely with the cage.

The boy stayed a few more days with the Dano and then he said, 'My mother will be weeping for me, I must go home.' The Dano said, 'Go then, but if there is any trouble, send the Golden Bird to call me and I will come.'

The boy set out with his wife. After a few days he came to the pig's house, and stayed there awhile. But soon he was on the road again with his second wife. The pig said, 'If you fall into any trouble, send for me and I will help you.'

In due time they came to the aonra tree, and the boy took his third wife with him. The wood-pigeon also said, 'If there is any trouble send for me and I will help you.'

At last they came near the boy's mother's house, and they sent word ahead that they were coming. The old woman was sitting in tears, but when she heard she came out with many women and drums to welcome her son and his wives.

When the Raja heard that the boy had returned he sent his police to see whether he had brought the Golden Bird or no. The boy said, 'Tell the Raja that I have the Golden Bird and will come to him tomorrow.'

The next day the boy left one golden bird in the cage at home and took the other to the Raja. When the Raja saw the bird he was

¹ In a Ho story, a friendly Rakshasa helps the hero to pick a flower growing in the middle of a lake by swallowing the water and later bringing it out again. Bompas, 468.

afraid, for he thought, 'Such a youth is dangerous. One who can find the Golden Bird may drive me from my throne. How can I kill him?' He put the bird in a cage and said to the boy, 'Go and fetch it a mate. What is the use of bringing one bird?'

The boy returned and told his mother and wives what had happened. They said, 'Hide in the house for a few days and then take the other bird to the Raja, pretending that you have been a great journey to find it.' The boy did as they advised, and after a few days took the other bird in its cage to the Raja.

When the Raja saw this he was still more afraid, and plotted secretly to kill the boy. So now he said, 'Beyond the city dig a great tank. In one night you must do it, and it must be full of water. If you fail, I will kill you and bury you there.'

The boy replied, 'After eight days I will tell you whether I can dig the tank or no.' The Raja agreed and sent the boy home. There he told all that had happened. His wives said, 'Don't be afraid, you can dig this tank. But we must send word to our parents.'

After a day or two while the Palace servants were feeding the Golden Birds, they escaped from the cage and flew to the boy's house. They said, 'Brother, don't be afraid; we are going to call your parents-in-law to help.' The birds went to the wood-pigeon and sat in the tree. She cried, 'Have you a message for me?' They said, 'Your son-in-law is in great trouble. Call all your relatives and go to help him.'

So they told the pig and the Dano, and returned home to the boy's house. They said, 'Go to the Raja, and say that you will dig the tank tomorrow night. Tell him that if you fail, he may kill you; but if you succeed, you will kill him and take his kingdom.' The boy did as they bade him, and the Raja was afraid.

The next day the pigeon army came, and the pig army and the Dano army. They said to the boy, 'Come, let us dig the tank.' The boy led them to the place. The pigeons spread their wings for twelve kos one way and twelve kos another, making a shelter above the others. Below, the pig army dug up the earth and the Dano army carried it away. Because of the shadow of the pigeons that night lasted six months, for none could see the sun when it rose.

When the tank was ready the Raja was afraid, and led his army out to fight. But the pigeons pecked at his soldiers, and the pigs tore them and the Dano army swallowed them till there was none

left. Then the Raja gave his daughter and his kingdom to the boy who ruled it happily with his old mother and his four wives.

3

THE GOLDEN PEACOCK

A Gond story from Karmora, Chhuri Zamindari

A goatherd had a little son whom he loved greatly. One day the boy said, 'Give me an axe and a blanket, for I want to earn my own living.' When he had them, he went out into the forest and made a clearing; he cut the branches of trees for fire and sowed rice in the ashes.

When the rice grew up the boy took his blanket every day and went to watch, but one day he was tired and slept all night. While he slept there came a peacock with golden wings and ate the rice. When the boy awoke in the morning and saw his crop ruined, he wept bitterly. But one golden feather had fallen in the field. He took it home and stuck it in the roof.

One day a barber came to the village. When he saw the golden feather in the roof, he reported it to the Raja. The Raja sent his sepoy to fetch the boy and his feather. When the Raja asked him how he had got it the boy replied, 'I found it in my field.' Hearing this, the Raja said, 'Bring the living creature from which this feather came, or I will bury you in the ground and light a fire on your head.' The boy was very frightened. He took his axe and his blanket and ran to his field. There he found the footprints of the peacock and followed them, but where it flew in the air it left no signs and the boy sat down at the end of the trail and wept. As he was weeping a sambhar came by and the sambhar said, 'Little brother, why are you weeping?' The boy said, 'Brother sambhar, the Raja has sent me to find the peacock with golden wings but I can see no trace of it and now he will bury me in the ground and light a fire upon my head.' But the sambhar took the boy on its back and ran through the jungle till they found once more the trail of the Golden Peacock. Then the sambhar went away and the boy followed the marks until they disappeared again.

Once more the boy sat down to weep and now an antelope came by and said, 'Why are you weeping, little brother?' The boy said,

'Brother antelope, the Raja has sent me to find the peacock with golden wings but I can see no trace of it and now he will bury me in the ground and light a fire upon my head.' So the antelope took the boy on its back and ran through the jungle till they found again the trail of the Golden Peacock. Then the antelope went away and the boy followed the trail.

But after a time the peacock must have flown into the air again for the marks disappeared and the boy sat down weeping bitterly. Then a tiger came by and said to him, 'Little brother, why are you weeping?' The boy replied, 'Brother tiger, the Raja has sent me to find the peacock with golden wings but I can see no trace of it and now he will bury me in the ground and light a fire upon my head.' So the tiger took the boy on its back and ran through the jungle till they came to a steep crooked hill and a flat plateau where the green bamboos sounded *kach mach kach mach*, where the dry bamboos made a noise like the beating of a nangara drum. There was a flowering bhoir tree there and twelve bears cried, 'Ho!' and sank back on their buttocks waving their paws in the air. There, when a leaf fell thirty-five tigers ran to see the sight. Thence far away on a high tree the boy saw the Golden Peacock. When he saw it was so far away he sat down and wept bitterly. But an elephant came by and said, 'Little brother, why are you weeping?' The boy replied, 'Brother elephant, the Raja has sent me to find the peacock with the golden wings but it is far away and I am unable to reach it and now the Raja will bury me in the ground and light a fire upon my head.' So the elephant took the boy on its back to the tree where the Golden Peacock was sitting. It broke the tree and the bird fell to the ground and the boy caught it.

When the boy brought the Golden Peacock home the Raja was so pleased that he gave him his daughter to marry and when he died the boy became the ruler of the kingdom.

4

THE LOST WIFE

A Gond story from Karanjia, Mandla District

There was a Gond boy living with his wife and mother. They were very poor, yet the boy's grandfather had been a Raja. The

boy had fields, many fields, and one pair of bullocks. In the old days, that family had treated their subjects well, and even now the villagers loved the boy and his mother. One day the boy thought, 'I have only one pair of bullocks for so many fields. I will ask the villagers to plough them as in former days.' So he went and asked the people to come for begar in his fields so that the rice might be sown.

Next day the boy went to the fields and found the villagers assembled. His wife climbed on the roof of the house to see how many there were. When she had counted them, she told her mother and they prepared *pej* for them. When it was ready the girl went out to get people to carry it to the fields, but she could find no one. She came home crying, for who would take the food to the ploughmen? At last, she said, 'I'll take it myself.' She filled five pots with *pej*, two with pulse, four baskets with rice, one with vegetables, two pots with water, a small basket with chutney and chilli, and a big net with leaves and leaf-cups. The old woman climbed onto the roof of the house, and placed the pots one above the other on the girl's head. Then the girl went, walking slowly and carefully, with her burden to the fields.

The ploughmen were very hungry and were watching the road for her coming. When they saw her they were afraid, thinking she was a demon. But the boy cried, 'Don't be afraid, it's only my wife. But don't any of you touch her—only the man who has wisdom should go and take the pots from her head.' No one went near, and she stood by the ploughs. Then her husband, thinking in his mind that some man must have placed all these pots and baskets on her head, angry and jealous, went to her with his ox-goad, and smashed the lowest pot so that all toppled over and the food spilled out and was spoilt.

The girl said nothing, but ran quickly home alone. The ploughmen were hungry and annoyed, but no one said a word. The boy told them to go to his house and bring his pig and two goats. 'We'll plough first and then we'll cook the meat ourselves here in the field.' He sent for liquor and in the evening they had a feast and were very drunk.

The next day, the boy said to his mother, 'There is a little land still to be ploughed; I will do it myself. Send your daughter-in-law with my food at midday.' So saying he took his bullocks and went

to the field. At midday, his wife took all that was left from yesterday's feast, and called her husband to eat. He sat down, and asked, 'Who put all those pots on your head? Why did you come and stand staring at people? Who were you looking at, you — —?' The girl made no reply, and when the boy had finished his meal he said, 'Come and let us go to the pool at the far side of the field and catch some fish.'

The two, husband and wife, went to the pool to kill fish. They went into the water, and there the boy beat his wife grievously and threw her down into the mud, supposing her to be dead. Then he returned to his field and began to plough.

But after a time the girl got up out of the mud, caught a great many fish, and quietly went to her house. When her mother-in-law saw her, she asked what had happened. 'O your son threw a lot of mud and fish at me, that's how I got so dirty.' She took a pot and went to bathe; the girls of the village saw her, and she cried to them, 'Come, friends, let's swim in the tank today.' A crowd of girls assembled and went with her to the tank. There the girl said, 'There's not much fun in only swimming; let's play dubki. All are to duck under the water and the one who comes up first will be an untouchable!'

So the girls, holding their noses, ducked under the water. But this girl remained standing, she did not put her head under water. When she saw everyone was out of sight, she ran away towards the jungle. After a long time, the others bobbed up gasping for breath, and there was no girl to be found. They searched for her everywhere in the tank, and at last decided that she must be drowned. Presently the girl's husband came there searching for her. The girls began to weep and cried out that she was drowned. The boy too plunged into the tank and everywhere searched for her. But he could not find her, and declared that she must have run away somewhere, or else gone down into the earth.

The boy went home, very sad. He remembered how his wife had not accused him of killing her, but had said he had been playing with her. 'Where can I find such a wife?' he said in his mind.

He reached home and asked his mother whether his ancestors had worshipped any special gods. 'Certainly they did,' she answered. 'But what could you understand of that?'

'Your ancestors, my son,' she said, 'were Rajas, and they had

many swords and guns.' 'What else had they?' 'They had the horse Hansraj.' 'Where are all these things?' 'They are buried in the earth.' 'Show me where and I'll dig them up.'

His mother took him to the place and when he had worshipped he dug up the treasure. Far below the earth he found Hansraj the horse. 'Who are you?' asked the horse. 'I am your master,' replied the boy. 'I have come so that you can help me in my sorrow. If you are truly the horse of my ancestors you must help me.' 'But can you climb on my back?' asked the horse. 'Yes, I can,' said the boy. 'Then go and get me water, and bathe me, and bring good food; after that we will ride out together.'

After the horse had bathed and eaten his food, he told the boy to get on his back. The boy cried, 'If you are truly the horse of my ancestors, take me to my wife.' But the horse said, 'Your wife has gone far away; we may not find her, but I will help you.'

Now the boy's wife had gone into the jungle and under a great banyan tree had turned herself into a stone. To this very place, the horse flew through the air with the boy on his back. The boy dismounted and tied the horse to a tendu tree. The horse said, 'Sleep on the stone', but the boy was afraid and slept nearby under the banyan tree.

In the morning, the stone turned into a girl and ran away. Away, away she went to Hathak River, where a bod fish swallowed her. Presently a fisherman and his wife came with their net, and they caught that bod fish. They took it home to Mirjapur village and cut it open. Out came a tiny little girl, like a new-born child. The woman stuffed some cloth into her sari and went round the village saying she was pregnant. Then she stayed indoors for two or four days, and said that she had given birth to a daughter.

When the girl ran away, the boy wanted to beat Hansraj. But the horse said, 'Beware, don't beat me. You are a fool. I told you to sleep lying on that stone which was your wife. Now where is the stone?' The boy looked everywhere, but it had disappeared. He fell at the horse's feet, saying, 'Take me to my wife; otherwise I will kill you and then myself.' Hansraj was angry at that and said, 'Listen, and I will tell you what has happened.' He described how the fish had swallowed the girl and all that had happened. 'I will take you to the river,' said the horse. 'There you must bury me under a teak tree. You must put food and water for twelve

years in the grave. You yourself must throw away your clothes and go as a Sadhu. If you do this you will find your wife. But if you disobey, I can help you no more.'

The boy sat on Hansraj's back, and the horse flew through the air to the river. The boy got down, he dug a pit and put the horse into it. Then he cried a word of truth. 'If this is truly the horse of my ancestors, let there be food here for twelve years.' And at once it was so. The boy took off his own clothes and threw them into the pit; then he filled in the earth above the horse and his food.

Now as a Sadhu the boy went to Mirjapur, begging as he went. So passed many days. One day he went to a Panka's house. Two or four men and women were sitting there, and were discussing how the fisherman and his wife had pretended to have a baby which had really been taken from the belly of a fish. In the middle, the Sadhu said, 'Have any of you seen this girl?' The Panka said, 'None of us have seen her. They keep her shut up in the house, and she never goes out for wood or water.' The Sadhu said, 'Can no one see her? Cannot I see her?' They said, 'You are a Sadhu. Of course, you can see her. But you must do it this way. This fisherman is very kind. Go to him at noon and say you are hungry. He will let you cook by his well. When you have cooked, stay there all night. Every day at dawn the girl goes to the well to bathe. If you are waiting there, you can see and talk with her.'

The boy did as the Panka had advised. At dawn the next day the girl came to the well to bathe, and the boy sat watching silently. But when she was about to return home, she saw him and said, 'O villain, why have you come here? I never want to see you again. I am going to marry the Raja.' So saying the girl went home. The next day the Sadhu-boy went again to the fisherman's house and said, 'I am ill today; let me stay a little longer.'

Now there was a Brahmin in that village. He went to the Raja and said, 'In a fisherman's house is a girl who is worthy of you, so beautiful is she.' The Raja was excited at that and sent for the fisherman. The Raja said, 'Give me your daughter and I will pay you what you will.' The fisherman was pleased and agreed to the match.

The fisherman went home and told his wife what had happened; the girl overheard their talk. When she went to bathe the next morning, she met the boy again and said, 'I am really going to be married to the Raja, so there can be no meeting of you and me. But

if you really desire me, then do as I bid you. Go to the town, and dress yourself as a learned Pandit. Walk round the streets crying, "If anyone would dig a well, take the omens from me; if anyone would marry, take the omens from me." They will surely call you to the Palace; when they ask you whence you came, say you came from Kashi Puri. Then they will ask you about the Raja's wedding. Say that the girl indeed is beautiful, but if the Raja goes round the sacred pole with her, he will die. They will ask you what to do. Reply thus: "Go forward with the marriage, but when the time comes for going round the pole, you will find a poor peasant at your door. Take him and make him go round with the girl. Then the Raja may safely take her to his house." That poor peasant will be you. Do as I say and all will be well.'

It fell out as the girl had said. On the day of the marriage, when everything was ready for going round the pole, the boy came with a load of wood crying, 'Buy my wood! Buy my wood!' When they saw him, the people marvelled at the wisdom of the Pandit, and took the boy, covered him with turmeric and made him take the girl round the pole. After they had finished, the Raja took them to an iron grain-bin and shut them up together. 'The boy', he thought, 'will die as the Pandit said, and then I can take the girl for myself.'

Night fell, and the guests slept. The girl took a bangle from her wrist and touched the door with it, saying, 'Open and let us go!' The door opened and the boy and girl went out together. Beyond the town was a mango grove; they went there and sat down to rest. The boy laid his head in the girl's lap and fell asleep. As he slept the dawn came, but the girl thought, 'If I wake him it will be a sin.' So she let him sleep.

When the Raja woke he went to the iron bin and opened it. There was no one there. He was very angry and sent his men everywhere to find the boy and girl. Soon they saw them under the mango tree wearing their yellow garments, and went quickly to tell the Raja. But the girl broke her bangles and with them made a great iron house around her. The Raja came to the house and called, 'Prepare to fight!' He began to fire cannon and guns at the iron house. The girl pulled out one hair and threw it towards the Raja. From that one hair a thousand serpents came into being. Then she threw one bangle, and a thousand swords were ready. The serpents

went towards the Raja's army and bit the soldiers. The swords flew through the air and cut them down. Thus died many of the Raja's soldiers. When the Raja saw this, he feared for his own life. He went quickly to the girl and fell at her feet, begging her to forgive him.

The girl clapped her hands and the snakes and swords returned to her, and the swords once more became a bangle and the thousand snakes a hair. The Raja returned to his Palace. The girl turned the iron house back into a bangle and put it on her wrist.

Then at last the boy awoke. He sat up and yawned and said, 'I have slept for a long long time.' The girl said, 'Look and see what has been happening.' The boy looked and saw nothing but blood and corpses, and was afraid. But the girl said, 'Don't be afraid. Let us go, and I will go with you.'

The boy went to the teak tree where Hansraj had been buried. He dug up the ground and fell at the horse's feet. Hansraj said, 'You have found your wife, but you were sleeping while she fought for you. Now you must fight and conquer the Raja before you can go home.' The boy mounted the horse and went to the Raja's Palace. He told the Raja the whole story of what had happened. 'And now while I slept you fought with my wife; this time you must fight with me.' The Raja said, 'I don't want to fight. Let me go in peace and I will give you half my kingdom.'

The boy went back to the teak tree. Hansraj took the boy and girl on his back and carried them home. When the old mother saw them she was very happy, and the boy bathed Hansraj and gave him a feast. Then said the horse, 'I have put sorrow far from you, and brought you joy. Now I must go, but don't be afraid. If you need help, worship me and I will come.'

So saying Hansraj flew into the air and disappeared, and the boy and girl lived together in great content.

5

THE MARRIAGE OF BAEI KANIYA

A Ghotul Pata story from Bandopal, North Bastar

There was a Muria Raja. His wife used to spend much time with the Raja's younger brother. One day they quarrelled and the

younger brother left the palace and went to another country. He journeyed on and on and on till he came to the seven seas where Jal Kaniya was living with her husband who was a Rakshasa. Beyond the seven seas her sister, Bael Kaniya, was living in a bael fruit.¹ This fruit was guarded by tigers, bears and snakes who lived for twelve kos around.

The youth did *johar*² to Jal Kaniya and she asked him why he had come. 'I have come to marry Bael Kaniya,' he said. When Jal Kaniya saw how handsome he was, she told him of the great difficulties of his task and that shortly her husband would return and would devour him. The sun began to set and she hid the *chelik* in an inner room as she heard her husband coming.

When the Rakshasa came home, he shouted, 'I smell the smell of a human being.' 'There is no one here but myself,' said his wife, but the Rakshasa insisted and at last she told him the truth after he had promised that he would not injure the boy.

Jal Kaniya called the boy from his hiding-place but the Rakshasa could not help himself; he opened his great mouth to devour him. But suddenly the *chelik*, by his magic, made himself very small, no bigger than his thumb, and went down the throat of the Rakshasa into his stomach. He took out his knife and cut open the giant's liver. He pierced his heart and then ripped open the stomach and so came out.

When Jal Kaniya saw what had happened she wept, 'How am I to live without my husband?' She told the *chelik* that the giant was the only person who could help him to pass the guards that protected the bael fruit in which Bael Kaniya lived. 'Don't be afraid,' said the *chelik*, 'I will restore your husband to life.' By his magic he made the giant well again and Jal Kaniya now begged her husband to help the boy and do no more harm.

The Rakshasa got a goat, some milk and a basket of fruit and took the boy across the seven seas towards the forest of Bael Kaniya. As they approached, the tiger attacked them but the Rakshasa gave it the goat to eat; then came the bear and they fed it on fruit; then came the snake and they gave it milk. So doing they reached the bael tree and picked the fruit. The Rakshasa gave the fruit to

¹ *Aegle Marmelos*, Correa.

² The customary form of greeting in Bastar.

the chelik saying, 'Don't cut it on the way, but wait till you get home.' He saluted the chelik and let him go.

The boy went on his way but the journey was long and on the third day he felt lonely and longed to see Bael Kaniya. He sat down by the side of a tank and cut open the fruit. Out came a lovely motiari who sat down and began to comb his hair. As she was massaging him the chelik fell asleep and the girl went to cook their food. When it was ready she tried to wake him up, but he was in a deep sleep and could not be roused.

Near that tank there was a dancing-ground to which the chelik and motiari of Tarbhum (the under-world) used to come in the evenings to dance and to drink the water of the tank. That night as Bael Kaniya was sitting beside her chelik trying to wake him, a chelik and motiari from the Tarbhum Ghotul came to drink water and found them. They at once went to report the matter to their Ghotul leaders, Hanajiha chelik and Hanajunge motiari, and told them how beautiful the maiden was. At once all the chelik and motiari came to the tank and forcibly carried Bael Kaniya away to their Ghotul in Tarbhum, while the Raja's brother remained asleep.

For six months the boy slept. When he woke up he found Bael Kaniya missing and went everywhere in search of her. As he went to and fro despairing he happened to tread on what looked to him like an ant's nest and heard a voice murmur, 'Who is this that is treading upon me?' The chelik cleared away the mud and found that the ants had built their nest on the hair of a human being. The hair was twelve kos long and when the boy had removed the mud for this great distance he found that the living creature was a Sadhu. The old man told the boy that he had been doing penance for many years and had forgotten where he was. 'Now tell me what I should give you.' The chelik told him everything that had happened and the Sadhu at once said, 'Bael Kaniya is in Tarbhum with the chelik there.' 'I will go and bring her back,' said the boy. 'But to reach Tarbhum,' said the Sadhu, 'you must have a rope made of the bark of twelve forests.' The chelik collected bark from twelve forests and made it into a great rope. Then the Sadhu tied one end of the rope to the boy's waist and let him down slowly. 'When you have found her, tug at the rope and I will pull you up again.'

When the boy reached Tarbhum, he found the chelik and motiari dancing on the first day of Bael Kaniya's marriage. He at once

attacked them and they fought for three days. At the end he killed all the chelik and motiari of Tarbhum and taking the maiden in his arms tugged at the rope. The Sadhu began to pull them up but when they were about half way Bael Kaniya said, 'I have left my necklace behind.' The chelik said, 'I will get it for you' and letting go the rope he jumped down again. But the Sadhu went on pulling up the rope until at last the lovely girl Bael Kaniya stood before him. The Sadhu fell in love with her and at once broke the rope into small pieces and threw them in all directions so that the boy would never be able to come back to the world.

Down below in Tarbhum the chelik found Bael Kaniya's necklace and tried to climb up to the world, but all his efforts were fruitless and at last utterly exhausted he lay down on the ground and slept. After two or four days the smell from the corpses of the dead chelik and motiari grew so strong that it attracted a pair of vultures and they flew down to Tarbhum. Among the corpses they found one that seemed to be alive. They roused the boy and when he told them all that had happened, they were filled with sympathy and decided to bring him back to the world. The female bird made him sit on its back and brought him to the earth.

Now the Sadhu had taken Bael Kaniya to his house. The boy went searching for her and at last found a maiden called Jugal Karo. She was the Sadhu's daughter, and was sitting on a swing. When she heard who he was the girl told him that the Sadhu was her father and that he had locked Bael Kaniya up in a room protected by seven forts. The girl then asked the boy to marry her. 'I will if you tell me where the soul¹ of the Sadhu is.' 'It is hidden in a bird's nest in the middle of the sea; take this ring and you can go there.' The chelik took the ring and threw it into the sea whereupon a great frog came to the surface and took him on its back and carried him to the place where the jugal birds had made their nest. There was one bird in the nest and the chelik took nest and bird and returned to Jugal Karo.

Meanwhile the Sadhu had come to the house. 'I smell the smell of a human being' he said. 'It is my future husband,' said the girl. 'Then I must see him.' But when he saw the boy and recognized him he forbade his daughter to marry him and carried him away to sacrifice him as an offering to Chandi Devi.

¹ 'Life-index'.

When they reached the place of sacrifice, the Sadhu made three piles of rice on the ground and told the boy to kneel down before them and eat them just as if he were a chicken. The boy said, 'I don't know how to do it, you show me first.' As the Sadhu bent down to eat the rice, the chelik seized his sword and killed him. From his blood a thousand Sadhus arose. As the boy killed one of them another thousand stood before him; as he killed another, another thousand came into being.

When Jogal Karo saw what was happening she got hold of the nest of the bird and broke its legs and wings, whereupon all the Sadhus' legs and arms were broken. Then she cut its throat and all the Sadhus died. The chelik then got on the Sadhu's horse and rode to the fortress where Bael Kaniya was imprisoned. He put her behind him on his horse and was riding away with her, but Jogal Karo saw them and, filled with jealousy, shot the boy with her bow and arrow and killed him.

Horse and maiden stood by the body weeping and the girl fell to the ground in sorrow. A mongoose heard their cries and, seeing the unconscious girl, tied a string by one end to her breast and by the other to a tree. 'As the girl wept for the loss of the chelik, the tree shook to and fro and in a little while she recovered her senses. 'What is the matter?' said the mongoose. When she told him, it said, 'There is nothing to be done, all that we can do is to bring firewood and burn the body.' While the horse and maiden were fetching wood, the mongoose gave the dead chelik some medicine to drink and he came back to life again. The mongoose then said that he was the chelik's stepbrother: 'I have a tail and this coarse hair because my mother gave birth to me in the fields while she was raking the ashes of the penda-cleaning, but your mother was confined in the Palace and that is why your skin is so soft and beautiful.'

When the horse and maiden returned laden with wood for the pyre, they were overjoyed at seeing the boy alive. He then called for Jogal Karo and told her that Bael Kaniya must be his first wife because of all the pains he had taken to win her, but that she must not be jealous, for he would marry her as well.

Then the whole company set out for home and when the boy's elder brother, the Raja, heard of his coming he came out to greet them and welcomed them to his house. From that day they all lived and ate.

6

THE STORY OF HIRA KALANGI

A Muria story from Chandabera, Bastar State

In the Tortoise City (Kachinpuragarh) lived Prince Hira Kalangi. The bed on which he slept was called Wajjintora.

In Berelpuragarh lived the Princess Kakranjkaro. Hira Kalangi sent his servants, Jhoria and Sirdar, to arrange his engagement with Kakranjkaro. They took as much phuli liquor as twelve outstills could make and the pasra liquor of thirteen outstills. Jhoria ate five paili of rice at a meal with one soli of salt and a double-handful of chilli and one paili of pulse. As he went Jhoria carried the liquor under his arm, the food over one shoulder and his spear over the other. In one stride he went the distance from one village to the next.

When the two servants reached Berelpuragarh, Jhoria threw his spear into the air, caught it on his chest and then thrust it into the ground in front of the Palace. He put the liquor and food down by the spear and went inside to bid johar.

The Raja of Berelpuragarh said, 'Don't come and salute me, go and salute that pig', pointing to an iron cage in which was a giant pig.

Now the teeth of that pig were as long as your arm. The Raja said, 'If you can kill this pig, you can marry my daughter.' Twelve kings had already come to kill the pig, but had failed and returned home.

When he heard this, Jhoria got his spear and followed by Sirdar went into the cage to fight the pig. When the fight began the dust was so great that the whole village became dark.

So passed seven months. Hira Kalangi began to wonder why his servants had not returned. He said to his elder brother's wife, 'Make ready my food and I will go to see what has happened.' She prepared twelve fistsful of rice and seven kinds of curry. Each fistsful lasted one year and the twelve fistsful for twelve years. Hira Kalangi mounted his horse, Dumalsai, and set out. He had a shield in one hand, a sword in the other; there were bells on the feet of the horse. Hira Kalangi said to his horse, 'If you are a real scion of your ancestors, take me safely and bring me back victorious', and in the name of his ancestors he offered one paili of

incense. He struck the horse and it leapt into the air. He went so high that his head touched the sky. When he looked down and saw Berelpuragarh, he descended. By his magic he then made his horse disappear.

Then Hira Kalangi went to the pig's cage and he, too, joined in the fight and killed the pig. Jhoria and Sirdar were lying senseless on the ground. He roused them and told them to drink the liquor and eat the food that had been brought for the engagement ceremony. He returned to his village. Jhoria and Sirdar carried the pig to the Raja and ate it and drank their liquor. The Berelpuragarh Raja said to himself, 'These are great warriors, for they have killed my pig.'

Now Kakranjkaro and her mother asked Jhoria and Sirdar where they had come from. 'We have come from Kachinpuragarh and this girl is for Hira Kalangi and not for us', they said. 'We will come again in a month to settle the bride-price.' So saying they returned home.

After a month they came again bringing liquor and food as before and saluted the Raja and Rani with johar. This time the Raja gave them water to wash their feet and asked them to sit on a cot. They said, 'In a month's time we will come for the marriage.' So saying they returned home.

When they arrived Hira Kalangi was sleeping and they asked the Palace girls to go and tell him that they had come. Hira Kalangi asked if the marriage date was fixed.

Now they began to prepare for the marriage. They got rice and salt. One day Hira Kalangi went to the Ghotul and asked the Ghotul Kotwar how many motiari there were. The Kotwar replied that there were twelve score. 'Who is the leader of the girls?', he asked. 'She is Gada Kare Mode.' 'And how many boys are there?' asked the Prince. 'There are fifteen score boys.' Hira Kalangi said, 'Tell them to prepare leaves and fuel for the marriage and the day after tomorrow we will go to fetch the girl.'

After two days they went and were received at Berelpuragarh. A booth was built there and the ceremony was performed. When all was done the parents bade farewell to their daughter and they set out led by the chelik and motiari, some riding horses, some on elephants.

A Raja was hiding by the roadside. Hira Kalangi was going

ahead and Kakranjkaro was with the chelik and motiari. The Raja leapt out of his hiding-place and caught hold of her. She cried, 'Go away, leave me alone', but he said, 'I came to marry you long ago but you refused; now you must come with me.' He caught her in his arms and flew up with her into the air. The chelik and motiari ran after Hira Kalangi and told him what had happened. When he heard he leapt onto his horse and followed his wife through the sky. After a time he found this Raja sitting, cooking with his knees as a hearth and Kakranjkaro clinging to him behind. The Raja said, 'Let me get up and I will fight you', but Hira Kalangi gave him no chance and cut off his head. Hira Kalangi took his Rani home.

After he had returned home Hira Kalangi thought to himself, 'It is not good only to govern a kingdom, I must also plough my fields.' He made a plough of gold and a yoke of gold, and took his pair of bullocks (their names were Chaural and Baural) to a field called Uppelalor Batti and then again to the field Kappekanar. In one day he tilled as much land as lay within a village boundary and returned home.

That summer the seven daughters of Bhagavan came to eat tendu fruit near Hira Kalangi's fields. They came down from the sky by a silken thread. They ate tendu fruit and chhind fruit and grew thirsty. They went to search for water. At that time Hira Kalangi was in his field and when he saw them coming he dried up all the water by his magic. When the girls found that there was no water there they went home angry and drank the water of the sixteen streams. They swore that they would make things difficult for Hira Kalangi when the rains came.

So when the rains came none fell in Hira Kalangi's village, though there was plenty all round. Three years passed but no rain fell there. The villagers came to the Raja and asked him why there was no rain saying, 'We can no longer live in your village and must go elsewhere.' But Hira Kalangi went to the neighbouring villages and borrowed rice to give on loan to his people for the coming season.

That summer Hira Kalangi himself went up the silken thread to Bhagavan to ask for water. Now the seven daughters had built a dam to stop the water coming down. When Bhagavan's daughters went to work in their houses Hira Kalangi began to break down

the dam to let the water free. When they saw what he was doing, the girls ran to stop him saying, 'You didn't give us water when we were thirsty', and they beat him with their sticks. The smallest daughter ran to Bhagavan, 'A man has come here and is beating us.' 'What is this quarrel about?', asked Bhagavan. 'For three years there has been no rain in my village', said Hira Kalangi 'and so I have come to get it and these girls refuse to give me water.' Bhagavan said to his daughters, 'Don't stop the water, or they will die.' Then the girls allowed the water to flow down and the Raja returned home, and that year there was a good harvest. Hira Kalangi lived in his kingdom and ploughed his fields.

7

THE HOSPITABLE BIRDS

An Agaria story from Gwara, near Marwai, Mandla District

A Raja's son and an Agaria boy became great friends, but as they were always up to mischief, the Raja had to banish them into the jungle. As the two boys went along the road they saw sparrows eating and asked them, 'Where can we get some food?' 'You must go to Aonrapur Patan Bazaar,' said the sparrows. 'You cannot get any food here.' So the boys went on their way till nightfall. They lay down under a cotton tree to sleep.

Now in that tree there lived two birds whose names were Chakki and Chakka for they loved each other like the two parts of a grindstone. One boy slept and the other kept watch and lit a fire. Chakka looked down and said to Chakki, 'Here are two hungry travellers staying beneath our tree and it is our duty to give them something to eat.' Chakki said to Chakka, 'We have nothing to give them, but if we fall down into their fire, they will get a good meal from our bodies.' The birds fell down into the fire and the Agaria boy divided each bird into three pieces and roasted them. He ate three pieces himself and put three aside for his friend. When the Raja's son woke up, he too ate his supper and the Agaria boy went to sleep. When he saw that his companion was sound asleep, the Raja's son went quietly away by himself. He wandered across the world and prospered, until at last he heard that his father had died and he went home and became Raja in his stead.

But when the Agaria boy awoke he was very frightened. 'Perhaps my friend', he thought, 'has gone to the Aonrapur Patan Bazaar,' and he went alone searching for him everywhere. After some days he came to the Hathak River. On the banks of this river lived a very old woman. The boy stayed with her and served her in every way. One day the old woman said: 'What can I give you?' 'I want to see Aonrapur Patan Bazaar', said the boy. 'But that is very difficult,' said the old woman. 'However, pick a mango over there and come without looking round.' The boy picked the mango, but he could not resist looking round and the mango flew out of his hand back to the tree. A second time he tried and the same thing happened, but the third time he brought the fruit to the old woman and she showed him the way to the bazaar. As he went along, the mango turned into a beautiful girl.

As the girl and the boy went together they met seven thieves. Into the minds of the thieves came evil desire and they threw the boy into a well and carried off the girl. But she turned back into a mango and they were frightened and put it down under a tree.

After a time there came to that very place the boy who had become the Raja. He was hunting and he rested under the cotton tree where Chakka and Chakki had died. By now the children of these birds had grown up and they sat talking in the branches. The elder bird told his wife the whole story of the Agaria boy and described the well into which the thieves had thrown him. The Raja heard them talking and went at once to the well and saved his friend. They went on together and found the mango lying beneath a tree. As they went towards their home, the mango turned once more into a girl and out of her body came Aonrapur Patan Bazaar and there were all the joys of a great market. There were no shopkeepers in that bazaar, there were only shops and every one helped himself to what he wanted. The Agaria boy was very pleased, but he turned the bazaar back into a mango and went home. Then every day the mango turned into a great bazaar, but at night it became a beautiful girl who delighted him as his darling wife.

8

THE FAITHFUL BROTHER

A Baiga story from Rewa State

A Raja had two wives, but they had no children. One day when he was sitting by the roadside wondering how to get a child, a Sadhu met him. The Sadhu said, 'If I give you two sons you must give the eldest to me.' The Raja agreed, whereupon the Sadhu gave him his stick and pointing to a mango tree nearby told him to hit the tree and divide equally between his wives as many mangoes as should fall to the ground. The Raja struck the tree and two mangoes fell. The Ranis ate the mangoes and at once became pregnant. In due time they gave birth to sons, but as they did not want to give the eldest to the Sadhu they adopted a very beautiful Chamar boy and kept him in the Palace.

When the children were twelve years old the Sadhu came for his reward and the Raja sent the Chamar boy to him with a basket of fruit. But the Sadhu was very angry and cried, 'Why do you lie to me? Both the boys will die if you try to deceive me.' The Raja, therefore, sent his own son and now the Sadhu ate the fruit and took the boy away with him. The whole family came out weeping to bid goodbye and the boy said to his brother, 'Plant a tulsi in the garden. So long as it is green you will know that I am alive, but if it dries up you will know I am dead.'

The Sadhu took the Raja's son to his hut and left him there while he himself went out to beg. The boy found that there were seven rooms in the hut. The first was full of human heads; the second had horses; the third had dogs; the fourth was full of earthen pots; the fifth contained a pile of men's arms; the sixth was a kitchen and in the seventh lived the Sadhu. When the boy went into the first room the heads cried out, 'Why do you come in here? The Sadhu will cut off your head also if he catches you.' The boy, frightened, was running out, and they called after him, 'Remember, whenever he tells you to do anything, make him do it first.'

After a time the Sadhu came back and told the boy to fetch him water. The boy said 'I don't know where the water is. You show me first.' So the Sadhu brought the water. Then he told the boy to light a fire and cook supper. But the boy pretended not to know what to do and so the Sadhu himself lit the fire and put a great pot

full of oil upon it. When the oil was boiling the Sadhu told the boy to walk round it seven times. But the boy said, 'You go round first and I will follow.' When the Sadhu had gone round the fire three times the boy picked up a sword and cut off the Sadhu's head. Then he took a horse and a dog and ran away.

It was dark and as he went through the jungle he met two tiger-cubs searching for food. Just then another tiger sprang upon the cubs and they roared for help. The boy killed the tiger and sat down to play with the cubs. As they were talking, their mother came by and cried: 'I smell the smell of man.' But the cubs ran to her and told her what had happened, begging her not to eat their new friend. When she heard the story the tigress was very pleased and gave the boy one of her cubs as a reward. The boy got on the horse and put the tiger-cub in front of him and the dog behind, and they rode on and on and on through the jungle.

The following night they came to the great tree where Rai Gidal lived with her children. There was a snake there that ate one of the children every night. When the boy saw what was happening he killed the snake and Rai Gidal gave him one of her children as a reward. When the sun rose into the sky, the bird flew above him, sheltering him from the heat.

At last the boy came to a great city and was welcomed by the Raja who gave him his daughter to marry. Every day he used to go out to hunt. His wife said, 'Go anywhere you like, but never turn to the north.' One day he saw a beautiful deer and chased it. The deer led him towards the north and after they had gone a long way it jumped into a deep well. The boy too, with his horse and the tiger-cub and the dog and the bird who sheltered him from the heat, all fell into the well and died.

At home in the Raja's Palace the tulsi withered and they wept, knowing that the boy was dead. His brother went to find his body. He came first to the Sadhu's house and the heads of the dead men told him where his brother had gone. When he came to the city the Raja did not realize that this was a different boy and thought that he was his own son-in-law and even the girl supposed him to be her husband. She brought him water and gave him a wooden seat to sit on, but he washed only his left hand and put his turban on the seat. When they went to bed he put his sword between him and the girl.

The next day he went out into the jungle to find his brother's body. He too saw a beautiful deer and followed it towards the north. The deer jumped into the well but the boy stopped his horse and looked down to see what had happened. In the boy's little finger there was magic. He cut it off and threw it into the well and all the dead came to life. But when the elder brother came out of the well and heard what had happened he said in his mind, 'My brother must have enjoyed my wife during the night', and he burnt with jealousy and killed his brother. He cut the body up and hung the pieces on a tree.

When the Raja's son went home his wife brought water and gave him a wooden seat to sit on. He washed his right hand and sat down on the seat and when they went to bed he slept in the girl's arms. She said to him, 'Why did you behave so strangely yesterday? You washed your left hand and you put your turban on the seat and all night there was a sword lying between us.' Then the Raja's son realized how wrong his suspicions had been and he felt very sad. But his wife had magic water. They took it to the forest and when they threw it over the younger brother's body, he came to life again.

9

THE HELPFUL MONKEY

*A Bison-horn Maria Pata story from Bara Harmamunda,
Bastar State*

There were seven brothers. One day they set out to search for wives. The eldest was lucky enough to get a bride soon after they started and the others asked him to wait with her by the roadside while they proceeded on their search.

On the way they met a bear. It stopped them and asked them where they were going. 'We are going to get wives to care for our houses and give us children.' 'But there are great difficulties on the way', said the bear. 'Unless I help you your journey will be fruitless.' Then the bear taught the Maria the use of roots and herbs to combat disease and magic and it gave them medicine which would bring back life to the dead. When it had finished they went their way.

Meanwhile the eldest brother sat talking happily to his new wife.

Presently a Ghasia came by and told them to go with him. 'We must wait here for my brothers,' said the Maria. 'No, you must come to the police at once for you have stolen this girl from her true husband.' So saying the Ghasia killed the Maria and hung his body on a mango tree. He carried the girl away to a place in the middle of the seven seas and sixteen rivers.

Now a monkey saw all that had happened and followed the Ghasia to see where it would go.

The six younger brothers failed to get wives in spite of the bear's help. When they returned, they found their brother missing. The monkey came to them and showed them where the body was hanging from the mango tree. The brothers gave the dead man the medicine they had received from the bear and he was restored to life. 'What will you give me,' said the monkey, 'if I lead you to the place where the Ghasia has taken your girl?' 'We will give you twenty rupees and a wife.' So the monkey took them to the seven seas and the sixteen rivers and when they reached the bank, it asked the eldest brother to draw on a bit of wood a picture of himself and his wife. He then crossed the water and when he found the girl showed her her husband's picture. She burst into tears, 'Take me at once to him,' she cried, but the monkey said, 'How can I carry you across this water?' 'What am I to do then?' asked the girl. 'Find out from the Ghasia where he keeps his life.'

Then the monkey hid in a tree and the girl went to the Ghasia and begged him to tell her where his life was. The first day he said it was in a fish. The girl ran to tell the monkey and the monkey went and told the brothers. They caught the fish and killed it only to discover that the Ghasia had deceived them. The second day the Ghasia said that his life was in a crab but when the brothers killed the crab they found they had been again deceived. At last the Ghasia said that his life was in a crane and this time when the brothers killed the bird, the Ghasia died. Then the monkey took the girl across the seven seas and sixteen rivers in the Ghasia's boat and gave her back to the eldest brother. 'Now give me my reward,' it said.

The brothers said, 'Go and get a wife from your own tribe and we will pay the bride-price.' Away went the monkey to the jungle but the other monkeys beat it and drove it out saying that it was outcaste from the tribe for having eaten with human beings. But at

last the monkey managed to get a widow and all the other monkeys of its clan came with them to get the bride-price. But the brothers had no money and so the monkeys took back the widowed monkey and were very angry.

After that the monkey daily came to the brothers' house begging for money till at last they became angry and set their dog on it and killed it.

IO

BELARIYA RAJA

A Dora-Kuruk story from Kaknar, Bastar State

The name of the Raja of Belargarh City was Belariya Raja. His Rani's name was Belariya Rani. They had six sons. When they were all six married, they went with their wives to live separately.

Belariya Raja had a mare whose name was Rannopoban. She had nine lakhs of wings and nine lakhs of heads.

One day the Raja said to his wife, 'O Rani, I am going to see the world. In the courtyard there is a tulsi tree; while I live it will flower, but if I die it will wither.' So said the Raja and he saddled Rannopoban and gave her incense saying, 'Come Rannopoban, my mare, we go to see the world.'

The Raja sat on the mare's back and the mare leapt four jhojan into the sky and came to Koelipurwa. There was a mango tree on the bank of the lake and the horse opened its door and put all the Raja's things inside the tree. The great horse made herself small and thin and went grazing by the lakeside. The Raja lay down beneath the mango tree.

The next day the chaprasi of the Raja of Koelipurwa came to bathe in the lake, and seeing Belariya Raja went to report the matter to the police. The Raja of Koelipurwa sent his soldiers to catch Belariya Raja and bring him to the Palace. But Belariya Raja refused to go saying, 'I have come here to fight your king.' He jumped on his horse and rode away to fight the Raja of Koelipurwa. Then followed a great battle, and in the end Belariya Raja was killed, and the mare Rannopoban made a prisoner.

Now in Belargarh the tulsi plant withered, and the Rani knew that her Raja was dead. She was pregnant and after some days, a boy was born. When the boy got old enough, he used to go to

play with the other boys, but they used to laugh at him. 'This rascal was born without a father!'

The boy went to his mother to ask where his father was. She said, 'Child, your father died many days ago.' Again he went to play, and this time an old woman said, 'It was Koelisurwa Raja who killed your father, and took his mare prisoner.'

Now the boy went to his mother and said, 'I have heard who killed my father. I must go to avenge him. Give me twelve loads of bows and arrows.'

His mother had twelve loads of bows made, and twelve loads of arrows, and the boy took them and set out to avenge his father.

II

A SON'S REVENGE

A Kuruk story from Chitrakot, Bastar State

A widow had one son. A gaur had killed the boy's father, tossing him on its horns. The boy used to take his bow and arrow and go out shooting sparrows. One day he hid by the well, and presently seven young girls came with pots on their heads to fetch water. The boy broke all seven pots with a single shot, and the girls screamed abuse at him, '*Mailotia*, fatherless, fool', and beat him.

The boy ran home to his mother and asked her, 'Where is my father?' She replied, 'My son, when you were a baby, a gaur killed your father and carried him away on its horns.' The boy had twelve loads of bows and twelve loads of arrows made, and with the iron bows and arrows went to the jungle to find the gaur.

He came to a lake and put down his load and rested there. Soon a jackal came to drink water. But the boy said, 'O jackal, don't drink the water here: go and send me a sixteen-antlered deer.' The jackal ran away. Soon a chital came to drink, but the boy cried, 'O chital, don't drink the water here.' The chital ran away and told the gaur, 'A giant has come and is sitting by the lake and will let no one drink.'

When the gaur heard this, it went to the lake, and the boy cried, 'Don't drink the water here.' The gaur said, 'I will kill you with one of my horns and pick you up with the other.' The boy said,

'Well, come and kill me.' The gaur rushed at him, but could not catch him. Then the gaur said, 'Well, now you can strike me.' The boy with a single shot from his iron bow killed the gaur.

Then the boy went to the gaur and found the body of his father still hanging from its horns. When he saw that he began to weep.

At that time, up in the sky Mahadeo was playing dice with Parvati. When the boy began to cry, Parvati heard it and said to Mahadeo, 'Someone is crying down there.' So Parvati made a crow from the dirt of her breast and sent it down to see what was the matter. But the crow flew down and finding food to eat did not return.

Then Parvati took some more dirt from her breast and blew it into the air and it became a bee. The bee went down and saw the boy weeping and flew back to say, 'A man has died and by his body a boy is sitting weeping.' Mahadeo and Parvati came down and said to the boy, 'After a little while, turn your back on your father.' The boy said, 'No, I can never look away from him.' But they said this many times to him, and at last he turned round and sat with his back to his father's body.

Then Mahadeo touched the body with the magic wand and sprinkled the water of life upon it, and the dead man became alive. Mahadeo and Parvati went up into the sky again.

The boy took his father home and they all lived happily together.

12

THE STORY OF JANGRALAL

A Kuruk woman's story from Chitrakot, Bastar State

An old woman had two sons; one was a bull and one a boy. The bull's name was Nandia, the boy's name was Jangralal.

When the boy grew up and was some five years old, he used to take the bull out to graze. In the evening, the boy and his mother used to have their pe and the bull had its grass. One day Jangralal took the bull to a river-bank, and after it had drunk some water it sat down in the shade of a tree. The boy played in the sun. Presently the bull began to sing,

'O brother, brother, little brother mine
Come and sit in the shade for a while.'

When Jangralal heard this he was frightened, for he had never heard the bull speak before. He stood still in the sunshine trembling with fear.

Then Nandia began to sing again. And now the boy himself sang a reply.

‘O brother, brother, elder brother mine
I am very hungry.’

To this the bull replied, ‘O brother, take some of my dung and clean a patch of ground with it. Then go and bathe, and come back quickly.’ The boy did as he was bid, and when he returned from his bath, he found rice and pulse ready on the place which he had dunged. When Jangralal saw the food he was frightened. But the bull said, ‘Eat it up and don’t be afraid. But first put a little of the food aside in my name.’ So the boy sat down and first put a little on one side in the name of Nandia his brother, then ate with great enjoyment.

After this, Nandia said, ‘Come, let’s go home.’ When they got home, they found their mother was away working. They had a very small hut. Nandia the Bull said to his brother,

‘O brother, brother, little brother mine
Clean this house with my own dung,
And afterwards with my dung prepare a model house.
Then offer incense to the house.’

Jangralal did as the bull told him and soon the dung house had turned into a fine Palace. When they went in they found gold and silver plates full of sweetmeats, and fine raiment. Then the bull began to sing again,

‘O brother, brother, little brother mine
Bring seven pots of hot water,
And seven pots of cold,
And bathe and offer incense in my name.’

Jangralal did this also, and as he finished he saw his mother return from her work and stand in astonishment before the Palace. Then the bull came out and sang to its mother,

‘O mother, mother, this is our little hut
Come and bathe and eat your supper.’

Then the mother, looking with fear and amazement at the bull, sang in reply,

‘O my son, my son, my elder son

This is no hut of ours.

This is some Palace, this is not ours.’

Hearing this, Jangralal came out of the Palace and catching his mother by the hand dragged her into the house. There were ready seven pots of hot and seven pots of cold water. He made his mother bathe in the water, and then dressed her in the most beautiful cloth. After this they ate sweet bread.

Soon the old woman got used to this new life and they all lived happily in the Palace. But after a few days Nandia sang to his mother,

‘O mother, mother, I want to go and arrange

Our little brother’s marriage.

I will return in twelve years time,

Do not worry whether I die or live.’

But the mother sang her answer, trying to stop him.

‘O my son, my son, my elder son

O my son, my elder son

You two are my sons.

If I do not see you both,

My eyes will break

And I will die, my son, my son.’

Nandia the Bull, her elder son, again answered her, trying to persuade her.

‘O mother, mother, when I have married my little brother

After twelve years I will bring him home.

Do not worry whether we live or die.’

So singing, the bull put into his belly and on his horns enough food and money to last twelve years. Then appointing servants to care for the Palace and serve their mother, the two brothers set out on their travels.

They travelled twelve kos, and came to a stretch of black stony ground. There the snake Gun-nang had been born and, taking the form of a man, was sitting and singing.

‘O big brother, O big brother, O Nandia the Bull

Stay a little while, for I would go with you.’

So Gun-nang sang two or four times. When Jangralal heard it he said, 'O big brother, who is this calling us by name? Let's stop for a little while and see who it is.'

So they stopped and Gun-nang in his man's shape came to them and prepared to go with them. Then sang the snake,

'O big brother, O big brother
I am going with you.'

And Nandia the Bull answered, for he knew everything, singing in his song,

'O Gun-nang, O Gun-nang
You may be our little brother.
I will take you with us.
But your father and your mother
Will abuse us.'

Then answered Gun-nang, 'I asked everyone first before I came. No one will be angry or abuse you. I must go with you without fail.' The bull said, 'Very well, if that is your desire, you may come with us.'

They went on together for another twelve kos. Then they met Sundar-mani-moharia, the flute-player. He began to sing,

'O big brother, O big brother
I want to go with you,
So stay and rest a little while.'

Thus he sang two or four times. When they heard what he said, they waited a little, and the bull asked him,

'O brother, brother, my little brother
Why have you come to us, my little brother?
Tell us what is your name.'

Then Sundar-mani-moharia replied,

'O big brother, O big brother
My name is Sundar-mani-moharia
And I want to go with you.'

But the bull said, 'No, we can't take you with us, for your father and mother will abuse us.' The flute-player replied, 'No, I asked everyone before I came. No one will be angry or abuse you. I must go with you without fail.'

Now there were four of them and they went on their way together. After they had gone another twelve kos, they met Tutta-daphalia, the crippled beater of the daphla drum. He too sang to them and joined the party.

Now there were five of them and they went on their way together. Now they were in the Ethban Sethban Forest, where no crow cawed, no sparrow chirped, where there was no smell of man, and soon they came to the Kajliban. Here was a lake. On the bank of the lake was a banyan tree. When the bull saw the lake, it said, 'If you agree, let us rest by this lake and underneath the banyan tree.'

Then said Nandia to Jangralal, 'Little brother, bend down my horn.' Jangralal took hold of one of the horns and bent it down and out of the horn came food and cloth. Jangralal bathed and after bathing worshipped his elder brother. Then after supper they all lay down under the banyan tree.

In that lake were the seven sisters called Purandaie, living beneath the lotus leaves. As the bull was grazing on the fresh green grass on the bank, the seven sisters sang to him,

'O big brother, O big brother
We would play at dice with your brothers.'

The bull stood on the bank and sang his reply.

'O my sisters, my sisters Purandaie
My brothers are very young,
They cannot play at dice with you.'

But the sisters answered, 'O big brother, we must play with your brothers.' The bull said, 'Very well, I will ask them.' But he thought to himself, 'If these girls win they will take my brothers and keep them in their house.' He came to his brothers and first he sang to Jangralal,

'O brother, O brother, little brother mine
In this lake are seven sisters underneath the lotus.
They want to throw the dice with you.'

When he heard this, Jangralal jumped up, and sang,

'O big brother, O big brother
If you bid us, we will play.'

So singing he woke Gun-nang, Sundar-mani-moharia and Tutta-daphalia.

Now of the seven sisters, the youngest—who was called Purandaie, or the Lotus Girl—was far the most beautiful, and her sisters were jealous fearing that the brothers would look only at her. So they covered her with black mud and spoilt her beauty.

Then the four brothers went with Nandia to the lake, and Nandia said, 'Here are my brothers, come to play with you.' The girls called back, 'We are hiding, your brothers must find us.' The four brothers ran everywhere and at last found the girls; they caught them by the hair and pulled them out.' Then the girls said, 'This time, you hide and we'll look for you.' Two of the boys hid in the bull's belly, and two crept inside its horns. The seven girls searched and searched till they were weary, and gave up the game. But the bull said, 'Well, you go and hide, and my brothers will find you.'

When the girls had hidden themselves, the boys came out of the horns and belly of the bull, and sought and found the girls. This happened three times. Not once could the girls find the four brothers. The last time, Jangralal caught the Lotus Girl, whose body was covered with mud. The six sisters laughed at him, 'Aren't you ashamed? You leave us who are so beautiful and catch this ugly child.' But Jangralal thought there must be some trick in this, and he brought water and washed off the mud, and she stood before him lovely as the moon.

The next day the brothers married Jangralal to the Lotus Girl, and afterwards the bull sang,

'O brother, little brother
Our journey is not done.
We must take the road again.'

They went on their way, six of them now with the Lotus Girl, and in time they came to Tilkagarh. Here too was a lake, and they camped on the bank. Now the bull sang,

'O brother, brother, little brother mine
But make a little hut of sticks and leaves.'
Do not build your Palace here,

So saying, the bull went to graze on the green grass by the lake, while Jangralal brought mud and the bull's own dung and built a little house. At once a Palace appeared. The brothers cooked and ate, and worshipped the bull. The bull said, 'Do all the work yourselves and do not let the girl go outside.'

But one day the Lotus Girl went out to bathe in the lake. As she came back she met the Raja's police drilling on the road. When they saw her, they went quickly to the Raja saying, 'O Mahapurub, there is a most beautiful girl by the lake, fit only for you.'

In the meanwhile, the Lotus Girl reached home and was taking her midday meal. The police came now, and went first to Jangralal and said, 'The Raja orders you to come to him.' The boy said, 'I will come in a little while.' The police went away. Jangralal told the bull what had happened. The bull then knew that his sister-in-law had been outside the house and someone had seen her. He said, 'Very well, you go to the Raja, but first bathe and offer incense in my name.'

As Jangralal offered the incense a fine horse stood outside the door, and royal raiment lay ready for him. The boy dressed himself and sitting on the horse went off to the Raja's Palace. When he arrived, he stood in the door and sang,

'O Raja, why have you called me here?

I have come as you desired.'

The Raja was sitting writing in his court, and when he heard this song he looked up and saw Jangralal who salaamed him. The Raja said, 'I want my elephant and your bull to fight; let us see which is the stronger.' Then Jangralal went home, sad and anxious, thinking that the Raja would surely have his elder brother killed.

When Jangralal got home he told the bull everything. The bull said, 'That is why I said only make a hut of leaves and branches and don't let the girl go out. But that doesn't matter now. Don't be afraid. I will fight this elephant.'

The next day they went to the fighting-ground. There the bull fought the Raja's elephant, and the bull killed its enemy. The Raja called Jangralal again and said, 'Your bull has killed my elephant; now let it fight against my pillar.' This was the plantain-pillar that stood by the Palace. It looked like a plantain tree, but it was iron within and full of swords and knives.

Jangralal went home weeping, for how could his brother overcome the pillar? When he told the bull everything, it answered, 'O little brother, this time I will have to die. When I am dead, take me home and bury me in the burying-place. Then after six months dig me up again.' As it said this, the police came to fetch the bull

and they went to the pillar. Jangralal followed and watched the fight between the bull and the pillar. The first blow bent the pillar; at the second the pillar fell on one side and the bull on the other, but the bull died. Jangralal came weeping and tied its legs together and carried it away. They all laughed at him, shouting, 'See the Chamar carries away the dead carcase to make leather.' But Jangralal dug the grave and buried his elder brother, and went weeping home.

The Lotus Girl comforted the boy saying, 'Now I and Gun-nang will look after you.' So six months passed. The Raja called Jangralal and said, 'You and I will have to fight.' The boy was afraid and came home, saying, 'We are to fight the Raja, who can save us?'

But after bathing, the boy offered incense in the name of Nandia his elder brother, and there at once was a fine horse and a sharp sword ready. Jangralal armed himself and went out to fight. But Gun-nang said, 'O big brother, don't go to fight; I will go instead.' Jangralal said, 'O little brother, how can you go before me?' The Lotus Girl said, 'O my Raja, my Raja, don't go, I will go and fight.' But Jangralal mounted his horse and at once it flew into the air, and quickly reached the battle-field. The Raja was there and the battle began. For seven days or eight days they fought, and Gun-nang growing anxious offered incense to Nandia the Bull. A horse and weapons were ready, and Gun-nang mounted the horse and rode away to the battle.

Jangralal had destroyed the whole of the Raja's army, and was covered with blood. Gun-nang could not recognize him, nor could Jangralal see his brother. So Gun-nang sang,

'O big brother, O big brother
Kill me too with your sword.'

Jangralal came and struck his brother with his sword but it could not hurt him. Then Gun-nang said, 'You have struck me, and I will strike you back.' So saying he rained blows on Jangralal but could not hurt him. At last, Jangralal asked his opponent his name and when he heard it, he told his own. Then they knew that they were brothers and both wept. They went home, and found the Lotus Girl waiting for them with seven pots of hot water and seven pots of cold. She bathed them, and the two brothers ate their food.

Six months had passed and Jangralal went to the place where he had buried the bull his brother, and dug down and found that the two horns had turned into karandia rats. Its four legs had turned into four horses, and its bones into bright swords. Jangralal took all these things home; he tied up the horses, and took his supper. Just then a chaprasi came to call him to the Raja.

Gun-nang sang to Jangralal,

‘O big brother, O big brother
Do not go; I will go instead.’

Jangralal agreed, and Gun-nang armed himself and mounted the horse and rode away to the Raja’s Palace. The Raja was sitting in his court, and Gun-nang stood in the door and sang,

‘O Raja, O Raja, why did you call me?
Quickly tell me, O Raja.’

When the Raja saw Gun-nang he rose from his chair, and Gun-nang dismounted and salaamed the Raja. They sat down together and the Raja treated his visitor with great honour. The Raja said, ‘There must be another battle between us.’ Hearing this, Gun-nang went away quickly and told Jangralal. Soon a chaprasi came to call them for the fight and sang,

‘O big brother, O big brother from another land
On the battle-field the red flag is flying,
All is prepared, come quickly to the fight.’

The two brothers bathed and offered incense in the name of Nandia the Bull, their brother, and sang,

‘Blow, blow your trumpet, O Sundar-mani-moharia
Beat, beat your drum, O Tutta-daphalia.’

As they began their music, two horses stood ready at the door. They sprang into the air four jhojan high, then came down four jhojan deep, and stood before them. The two brothers armed themselves and mounted their horses. At that moment the Lotus Girl came out and sang,

‘O my Raja, O my Raja
You are all going to the war.
How can I stay here alone?
The enemy will send and carry me away.’

Then Gun-nang sang to Jangralal,

‘O big brother, O big brother
Do not go to the battle.
I will go instead.’

Jangralal therefore decided to stay at home to guard the Lotus Girl, his queen. The other three brothers rode away to the battle-field. When they reached the place, Gun-nang sang,

‘Blow, blow your trumpet, O Sundar-mani-moharia.
Beat, beat your drum, O Tutta-daphalia.’

When the horse on which Gun-nang was riding heard their music, it flew up into the sky, then came down over the heads of the Raja’s army and Gun-nang killed them with his sword as he flew above them. But most of all, he sought the Raja himself. He could not find the Raja on the battle-field, so he flew over the royal Palace, and took the horse down to the door and began to sing,

‘O Raja, O Raja
There is war between you and me.’

But the Raja had hidden himself for fear. The Rani came out and sang,

‘O brother, O brother, O my true nephew
Do not kill my Raja
And I will give you my daughter in marriage.’

Now at this time, the Lotus Girl had been getting very anxious and she said to Jangralal, ‘Let me go and see how your little brother, my dewar, is.’ She dressed herself as a man in Jangralal’s clothes and mounting his horse flew through the air to the Palace. There she saw Gun-nang standing with his horse outside the door. When she saw him she sang,

‘Strike me, strike me, little brother
Or I will strike you myself.’

She did not recognize Gun-nang and Gun-nang thought that this was the Raja, and he raised his sword and struck the girl, but did not injure her. Then she struck back but again there was no injury. Then sang Gun-nang,

‘O big brother, O big brother.
Tell me your name.’

And the Lotus Girl dressed as a man replied,

‘O brother, O little brother
My name is Purandaie.
Now tell me what is your name.’

To which Gun-nang astonished answered,

‘O my Rani, O my Rani
My name is Gun-nang.’

Then they both wept together, and went home. Gun-nang told Jangralal all that had happened. While they were talking a chaprasi came from the Raja saying, ‘Prepare for the wedding.’ At that the four brothers made a hole in the wall and shut the Lotus Girl up inside, plastering it so that no one would know where she was, and went for the marriage. When Jangralal, Gun-nang, Sundar-manimoharia and Tutta-daphalia reached the Raja’s Palace, Gun-nang went inside and the other three stayed outside in a separate house.

Now the Raja had concealed inside the Palace his soldiers, and when he saw that they had left the Lotus Girl behind, he sent another company of soldiers to find and bring her. But when they reached Jangralal’s Palace they could find no one, and returned and told the Raja. The Raja gave Gun-nang his food and while he was eating called his soldiers and shut the doors. But Gun-nang picked up the pot from which he was drinking and killed all the soldiers and the Raja too. He found the Raja’s daughter Tilakdaie and dragged her out of the Palace. Then he went to Jangralal and sang,

‘O big brother, O big brother
This Raja is very cunning.
He nearly killed me and threw away my body.
He gave me food in a golden dish,
He gave me water in a silver pot,
And shutting the doors called his soldiers to kill me.
O big brother, I killed them all with the silver pot,
And I’ve brought the Raja’s daughter.’

When Jangralal heard this he was very pleased and embraced Gun-nang and kissed him. Then they took Tilakdaie with them back to their Palace. They brought the Lotus Girl out of the wall,

and she quickly brought seven pots of hot water and seven pots of cold and they bathed. Then said Gün-nang,

'O big brother, O big brother
You too marry Tilakdaie.'

Jangralal sang in answer,

'O brother, brother, my little brother
We are going to marry this girl to you.'

So saying, he offered incense in the name of Nandia the Bull, their brother, and at once all the preparations for the wedding were complete. At the wedding, Sundar-mani-moharia and Tutta-daphalia made the music, and so Gun-nang was married.

They remained there for a little while, and then prepared to return home. Jangralal and the Lotus Girl sat on one horse, Gun-nang and Tilakdaie sat on the second, Sundar-mani-moharia sat on the third and Tutta-daphalia sat on the fourth. Ahead ran the two karandia rats and made the road for them.

After many days they came to Lanka-garh, and there made their camp on the banks of a lake. There too they fought and overcame the Raja of Lanka; it was the Lotus Girl who killed him and brought his daughter Sundardaie out of the Palace. Jangralal married her as his second wife.

Then from Lanka-garh they continued on their way, the karandia rats making a road for them as they went. After many days they reached Songarh. There too they camped on the banks of the lake outside the city and fought the Raja of that place and overcame him. It was Jangralal who killed that Raja and brought his daughter Sondaie from the Palace and married her to Gun-nang.

Then Jangralal, Purandaie and Sundardaie sat on the first horse, Gun-nang, Tilakdaie and Sondaie sat on the second, Sundar-mani-moharia on the third and Tutta-daphalia on the fourth. After many days they came to Bessragh. The Raja of that city had a bessra bird; it was so powerful that no Raja could stand against it, it destroyed them all. Gun-nang fought against the bird and killed both bird and Raja. He captured the Raja's daughter Bessradaie and married her to Sundar-mani-moharia. They stayed here for a time, then went on their way.

By the roadside was a well, and here was the daughter of a Mahara who had become a Christian. She was drawing water from

the well. When he saw her, Jangralal went to her and talked to her sweetly, saying, 'I have a little brother here; I want you to marry him.' She said, 'I am a Mahar's daughter, and I have become a Christian. You are a Kshattri; how can your brother marry me?' But Jangralal took no notice, and married her to Tutta-daphalia. Her name was Phulmati.

Then Jangralal, Purandaie and Sundardaie sat on the first horse, Gun-nang, Tilakdaie and Sondaie sat on the second, Sundar-manimoharia and Bessradaie sat on the third and Tutta-daphalia and Phulmati sat on the fourth. In front of them went the karandia rats making a road. So they reached their own home.

When they were a few miles from the city—who knows how far it was—they made their camp on the banks of a lake. Jangralal went by himself to his mother's house. There he found her old and dirty and alone, her eyes were closed with filth and her clothes were tattered and evil-smelling. When he saw her and remembered his brother Nandia the Bull, Jangralal wept. Then he began to sing,

'O my mother, O my mother
O my dear old mother
Your son has come home with his bride.'

The old woman sang,

'O my son, where has he gone?
I have had no news of him
For many years.'

Then Jangralal brought seven pots of hot water and seven pots of cold and bathed his mother, and told her something of what had happened. When the old woman realized that this was really her son, her eyes opened and she called the people of the city and brought drummers and they went to the lake to bring her daughters-in-law.

Then Jangralal said to his brothers,

'O my brothers, O my brothers
Go now each to his own home,
Or your parents will abuse me.'

And they answered,

'O big brother, O big brother
We will never leave you,
Let us all live here together.'

So they began to live together in Jangralal's Palace. But the old mother wept for Nandia the Bull, her son, and when she heard that it was dead she too died. The four brothers buried her. The two karandia rats and the four horses stayed with them all their lives and helped them in joy and sorrow. But whatever happened to them was good and they lived in happiness.

13

THE MAGIC EYES

A Bison-horn Maria story from Pondum, Bastar State

A Maria Raja had seven sons. In a neighbouring kingdom there lived another Maria Raja and he had seven daughters. Each Raja was wondering how to marry his children. But as they did not know about each other, they could not make a family alliance that would have been easy and suitable.

At last the seven sons of the Raja decided to go out themselves to seek for brides. But the Raja said that one son at least must stay behind to help him to rule the kingdom, and he kept the youngest boy, whom he loved dearly, with him. As the six elder sons went on their way they heard about the Maria Raja with his seven daughters, and they went to him and their marriages were performed. They brought the seventh girl back with them for the youngest brother.

As they were returning home, they took shelter under a great banyan tree which overlooked a tank. In this tank there lived a Raksa. Desire came to the Raksa when he saw the seven beautiful girls, and he decided to destroy the six brothers. He rose in the air and fell upon them, just as when a cloud falls upon the sun and eclipse follows. The six brothers with their horses turned into stone, and the Raksa was free to carry off the girls. But they said that they were in their menstrual period and he could do nothing. He bathed in the tank and then went to the jungle to dig for roots. Every morning he used to go out and come home at night.

The youngest brother at home grew tired of waiting, and soon they were all wondering if any misfortune had befallen the other

boys. So he set out in search of them, and in time reached the Palace of the other Maria Raja who told him that the brothers had left for home with their brides many days before. The boy followed the path taken by his brothers, and soon came to the tank and saw the seven girls under the banyan tree. They told him what had happened and when evening came they begged him to run away, for the Raksa would return and kill him.

But the boy by his magic turned himself into a fly, and stayed in the banyan tree unnoticed by the Raksa. The next day when the Raksa had gone out for work, the boy took his human form again and told the girls that when the Raksa next returned they should ask him where his soul was kept. That evening the Raksa came home late, and the girls pretended to be anxious about him and said, 'You come so late at times and we get worried. Please tell us where your soul is so that if there is any difficulty we can at once come to help you.' The Raksa said, 'Beyond the seven seas and the sixteen streams there is a banyan tree. On this tree there sits a golden bird and in that bird is my soul.'

Next morning the Raksa again went out to work, and the girls told the Prince what he had said. He at once set out to find the golden bird. On his way he passed a toddy tree in which was a bird's nest. Now every time this bird hatched its chicks, a snake used to crawl up the tree and devour them. As the Prince was passing he heard the cries of the chicks, and saw the snake going up the tree. He drew his sword and killed it and went on his way. When their mother returned the little birds told her how the Prince had saved their lives. The bird wishing to show its gratitude flew after him and said, 'I will go with you in your quest for the golden bird.'

After a long time they came to the seven seas and the sixteen streams, and the bird took the boy on its back and carried him across. There was the banyan tree and when the boy had climbed it, he found the golden bird. As he took the bird in his hands, at that very moment the Raksa fell ill.

The friendly bird took the Prince back across the seven seas and the sixteen streams, and before long he reached the tank where the seven girls were awaiting him. Now he plucked out the feathers of the golden bird, and the Raksa's hair came from his

head. He broke its wings and the Raksa's arms were broken. He broke its legs and the Raksa's legs were broken. Then with the crippled golden bird in his hand the boy went to the Raksa lying helpless and said, 'If you do not bring my brothers back to life, I will cut the neck of the bird and you also will die.' The Raksa made the brothers alive again, but the boy broke the bird's neck and the Raksa died at once.

But when the youngest boy told the others all that had happened and how he had saved them, they grew jealous and wanted to kill him. The eldest brother, however, did not like this idea, and suggested that his eyes should be put out instead. 'Come down to the river bank, brother,' they said, 'and let us get some fish.' When he went there, they put out his eyes and left him to his fate. When they returned to the banyan tree, the youngest boy's girl asked where her husband was, and they said he would be following soon. So saying they started on their journey home. But the girl suspecting that some evil had been done, lagged behind and presently discovered her husband blind and miserable by the river. She begged him to go with her, but the boy said, 'If you really love me, do what I say. Go to the kingdom of such and such a Raja, and when they see you there everyone will love you for your beauty. But you say that you will only marry the man who can shoot an arrow direct into the sky.' The girl did what he said, and hundreds of people came to marry her. But no one was able to shoot an arrow direct into the sky.

In the meantime the blind Prince managed to cross over to the opposite bank of the river, and there he heard a Maria driving the birds away from his maize fields. He himself offered to watch the crops, but the Maria laughed at the thought of a blind boy being able to drive birds away. 'But show me round your fields once,' said the boy, 'and I will be able to do everything you want.' The Maria took him round the field and the boy picked up a great many stones and sat on the machan. Every time he heard the flutter of birds' wings he threw a handful of stones towards the noise, and the birds were frightened and flew away.

Now in that river lived seven Water Maidens and a ghost. Every night they used to come out and play and dance. When they saw the boy on the machan, they asked him to join them.

But he said he could not as he had no eyes. So the Water Maidens brought him a pair of eyes, and the boy was able to see and play with them. But the eyes were always taken back by the Water Maidens before day-break, and the Prince would become blind once again. This happened for many nights and days, and then one day the boy told the Maria his whole story. The Maria was pleased with the boy for saving his crops from the birds, and he decided to help him to get his pair of eyes away from the Water Maidens. He brought the other villagers, and they hid behind bushes near the river-bank. In the evening the Water Maidens and the ghost came to play and gave the boy his eyes as usual. Directly he got them the boy ran away, and as the Water Maidens and the ghost were chasing him, the villagers came out of their hiding-place and drove them back to the river.

Now the boy went out to find his bride. On his way he heard everyone talking of the beautiful girl who would only marry the man who could shoot an arrow straight into the sky. He went to the place and at once shot an arrow into the sky, and claimed the girl as his bride. But he was so dirty and in such tattered clothes that she did not recognize him. But when he dressed himself with the clothes and the ornaments that the Raja gave him, his true form was revealed and his bride knew him. When the Raja heard that the boy was a real Prince, he gave him much money and a troop of soldiers and sent him to his home.

When he reached his father's kingdom, he made his camp close to the Palace and invited his father and the brothers to take food with him. But he did not tell them who he was. As they were talking the Raja described how his youngest son was missing. Then the Prince said he would tell them a story, and he told them everything that had happened to him. The old Raja recognized his son and was filled with joy, and the six wicked brothers were banished from the kingdom. The youngest son then ruled the kingdom, and married the six wives of his brothers as well as his own bride.

14

THE LOVING GHOST

A Bison-horn Maria story from Tikanpal, Bastar State

A Raja and a Rani had seven sons, all of whom were married when they were still children. But only the wives of the first six were grown up and lived with their husbands. The youngest boy's wife was a very small girl, and he did not even know that he was married.

Each of the six wives used to cook for the family in turn. But though they loved the youngest brother and did their best to please him, he was never satisfied and was always grumbling. At last the women said to him, 'Why don't you send for your wife? She might be able to cook better.' The boy replied, 'How can I send for my wife, when I am not married?' The women laughed at him, and told him how he had been married when he was a baby.

When he heard this the boy decided to go and fetch his wife, and on his way he went to Mahapurub and said that he was going to bring his wife to his house. Mahapurub made him first cook his food and fill his belly before proceeding on the road. The boy made a hearth with two stones, but instead of the third stone he put his own leg there. Presently the fire burnt his leg, and he pulled it away and the food was spilt. Mahapurub told him how to put three stones for a hearth, and when the boy did so he was able to cook his meal and eat.

Then Mahapurub gave the boy a stick. Pointing to a bel tree he said, 'Hit that tree with this stick and pick up whatever drops from it.' The boy hit the tree, and a small branch fell to the ground. 'Tie this to your stick', said Mahapurub, 'and so go on your way.'

The boy went on his way, and after a little while came to a great river which he could not cross. With the branch of the bel tree tied to his stick he was able to dry up the water and cross over in safety. On the far side of the river he came to a great building, and there in the upper storey was his bride combing her hair. The girl at once recognized him as her husband, and she let down her sari for him to climb up by. But when he was half way up, the sari broke and he fell down and died.

The girl called for the Kuruk in her household and said, 'My ring has fallen down, go and fetch it for me.' When the Kuruk saw the dead body, they told the girl and she said, 'Prepare my chariot.' This chariot could fly through the air and come down to the ground at will. The girl put the corpse in the chariot, and commanded it to fly to her husband's house so that his body could be disposed of by his parents with the proper rites.

After they had gone a great distance the girl grew thirsty, and asked the chariot to descend near a stream. Here she saw a company of sparrows chatting to one another, husbands and wives making love, mothers feeding their babies, children playing, and she was very pleased at seeing their love for one another. But suddenly two of them began to quarrel, and the male bird killed its mate leaving its young chicks sad and helpless.

The girl could understand the language of birds, and she heard the chicks refusing to be fed by their father and begging that their mother should be brought back to life. The male bird prayed to Mahapurub to restore life to his wife, but in vain. Finally one of the baby sparrows said, 'Go, father, to that root which is growing over there, and give it to our mother to smell and she will come back to life.' The father got the root, and when the mother bird smelt it she recovered and they were all very happy.

When the girl saw this she too got a bit of the root and gave it to her husband to smell, and he too was restored to life. With great joy they got into the chariot and bade it fly into the air. After a little while the boy became thirsty, and they brought the chariot down to a well.

Now this well was inhabited by the ghost of a woman who had died during her menstrual period. Leaving her husband in the chariot, the girl was going to get water for him from the well when the ghost came to her in human form and said, 'Sister, you look very tired. Sit down here for a little while, and I will give water to my brother-in-law and will return.' So saying she went a little way towards the chariot, and then returned. 'But sister', she said, 'my brother-in-law says he will only take water from me if I am dressed in your sari and ornaments.' So they exchanged their clothes and ornaments, and the ghost took the water to the boy in the chariot. He thought that it was his own wife, and made her sit with him and told the chariot to fly into the air.

But his wife was helped by her god to follow them through the air, and just as the chariot alighted at the house of the boy she too came down to earth from the sky.

Then the ghost cried to the boy, 'Look, there is the ghost. Drive it away.' The boy gave orders for his wife to be put into a well. There she remained for a time until she was rescued by a cowherd who came to fetch water. She sent him to fetch a branch of a sandal tree, and by her magic turned it into a great and beautiful Palace.

Now let us leave the girl for a time and see what is happening in the Raja's house. As the days went by, it became the turn of the ghost to cook food for the family. As this woman had died during her period, she was unclean and everyone in the house fell ill when they ate from her hands. But the youngest boy went out to hunt, although he felt very unwell. As he went along, he came to the place where his wife was living in her beautiful Palace. The cowherd came out and said he would go with him. 'I will first go to my house and get some food for the journey.'

Now the girl had prepared some very tasty dishes and when the young Prince sat down to share the cowherd's food, he was astonished to find how nice it was. He asked if he might come to dine with him the following day. The next evening the boy went to the Palace, and the girl again prepared a wonderful meal. As they were eating, she asked the boy to tell a story. He said that he did not know one, so she herself began to tell the tale of everything that had happened.

When the Prince realized his mistake, he had the ghost killed at once and her body buried outside the village on the far side of a stream. The priest drove four iron nails into the corners of the grave, and the ghost came to trouble them no longer.

NOTE 1

The Aonrapur Bazaar

The *aonra* (*emblica officinalis*, Gaertn.) is considered by the Hindus propitious and chaste¹ and is worshipped to ensure the fertility of women, animals and crops. In Bastar, rings made of *aonra* leaf are used in many different ceremonies. They are offered to the

¹ Crooke, ii, p. 102.

Water Maidens and to the spirits of hill and forest. A line of rings is placed across the path on which girls and boys set out on dancing expeditions or hunters go for the chase. The reason why Aonrapur Bazaar should be connected with a mango-girl is not clear. I suspect a mistake and that the girl really was concealed in an *aonra* fruit.

NOTE 2

The Twelve Years' Segregation

This is a common folk-tale trick to save the chastity of the heroine or to prolong a story which is approaching its climax too rapidly. In the Bengali tale of the Silver Tree,¹ when the wicked brothers carry off the heroine she tells them that she has made a vow that no one should touch her for twelve years, that her husband had never touched her and that if they did try to force her they would at once be turned to ashes. In other Bengali stories recorded by Day, the Prince's wife in 'Fakir Chand', Champa Dal's wife, and 'the lady of peerless beauty' delay marriages that are being forced upon them—one for twelve, the others for six, months—by saying they have taken a vow of religious observances which cannot be disturbed.² In our story a heroine abducted by a Sadhu tells him that she has taken a similar vow and that if he touches her she will die immediately. The twelve years' seclusion appears in a legend given by Crooke to explain the worship of Bhishma. 'A childless Raja once threatened to kill all his queens unless one of them gave birth to a child. One of the Ranis who had a cat announced that she had been brought to bed of a girl, who was to be shut up for twelve years, a common incident in the folk-tales.'³

In the story of Lohabanda Raja, the heroine explains that her menstrual periods each last twelve years, and that her captor must wait till she is free of that dangerous and magical contagion before she can marry. The Gond of Mandla say that Sita protected herself against Ravana by a continual menstruum. No doubt this idea is at the bottom of the twelve-year segregation everywhere.

NOTE 3

The 'Show Me How' Motif

Bloomfield has called this a psychic motif, a class in which the mental processes are the same but the actors and real properties differ in almost every case.⁴ The story of Siddhikari in the *Katha*

¹ *Indian Antiquary*, i, 120.

² Day, 29, 90 and 217.

³ Crooke, i, 93. See also *North Indian Notes and Queries*, iii, 181; Knowles, 136; Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, ii, 225 and Clouston, i, 344.

⁴ *J.A.O.S.*, xxxvi, 54.

Sarit Sagara (Chapter XIII)¹ finds a variant in the *Panchatantra* where 'a neglected merchant's wife runs away with his jewels. She rests under a banyan tree, where a drummer observes her and finds out her story. Wishing to possess himself of her jewels, he tells her that her conduct is unseemly, that she would suffer from the wives of her brothers, and advises her to commit suicide. She says she does not know how: he shows her how to do it with a drum-cord. She is to fasten the cord to the tree, put her head into the noose, and then move her feet. At her request he shows her how, inadvertently pushes the drum away from himself, and hangs by the neck. The woman returns to her husband.'²

But the most common application of this motif is to the incident where a wicked Sadhu wishes to destroy the hero by tricking him into an attitude where it will be easy to murder him. The hero persuades the Sadhu to show him how he is to do it, and kills him first. Bloomfield gives several examples of this from Hindu literature.³ In our stories we even have the traditional pot of boiling oil into which the wicked Sadhu desires to throw the hero. A story not unlike that in the text is common in the Mandla District about the Gond king Sangram Shah. This king, who reigned at the end of the fifteenth century, built a great reservoir near Garha and dedicated on its bank a temple to Bhairon the Terrible. In this place, the story goes, a Sannyasi, who had sworn an oath to offer the blood of kings in sacrifice to Siva, took up his abode, intending to make a victim of Sangram Shah.

He persuaded the ambitious king that by due rite and ceremony he could so propitiate the deity of the Temple as to win his aid in extending the borders of his kingdom over all the neighbouring states. These rites and ceremonies were to be performed at night, when no living soul but the Prince and he might be present to witness them; and a time was duly appointed. As Sangram Shah was about to start at midnight on this mysterious errand, a servant warned him that there was treachery afoot; he therefore prayed that he might be present at the ceremony; but this the king refused, and concealing a sword beneath his cloak, sallied out to his tryst. After some trifling preparations the priest requested him to begin the awful ceremony by walking thrice round a fire, over which was placed a cauldron of boiling oil, and then to fall prostrate before the God. While he was giving these instructions, the king noticed that the priest also was wearing a naked sword beneath his garment. 'In such solemn and awful rites', he said, 'every ceremony must needs be most scrupulously performed; pray thee, therefore,

¹ Penzer, i, 157 and 174-176.

² See Penzer, vii, xiv.

³ See his encyclopaedic article 'On False Ascetics and Nuns' in *J.A.O.S.*, xliv, 213 ff.

go through them first and show me.' The priest walked thrice round the fire, stopped, and begged the king to go through the simple ceremony of prostrating himself thrice before the idol, repeating each time certain mystical phrases. The king insisted on his going through this part of this ceremony also, and, perceiving that the priest was without doubt bearing a sword, was satisfied of his guilt and with one blow of his scimitar severed his head from his body. The blood spurted from the headless shoulders on to the image of the God, who started into life, crying, 'Ask, ask.' 'I pray thee', said the king, 'give me victory over all my enemies, even as thou hast given it me over this miscreant.' The God bade him fly a brown-coloured pennant, turn loose a jet-black horse from his stable and follow him whithersoever it might lead. This he did, and in a few years made himself master of fifty-two rich districts.¹

It is curious that the most widely known example of this motif, the beast-fable of the Tiger, the Brahmin and the Jackal, in which a Brahmin releases a tiger from a trap and when the ungrateful beast wants to devour his benefactor, is tricked back into its cage, of which I give an example in Chapter XVIII with references to the relevant literature, omits this motif and concludes with the tiger enjoying the Brahmin's flesh. This may possibly reflect an anti-Hindu tendency among the aboriginals.

NOTE 4

The Life-Index

'In the folklore of many nations there is one prime means of securing human life from any injury. This method is to make life dependent upon some external object and then to guard the object in every possible way. Such an object is known to students of folklore as the Life-Index.'²

This subject has been so fully examined by scholars that it will be sufficient briefly to mention it and indicate its literature. Hartland gives over fifty informative pages in his *Legend of Perseus* and has an article on the 'Life-Token' in Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, xiii, 44 to 47. In English, Clouston, *Popular Tales and Fictions*, i, 347 to 351, Macculloch, *The Childhood of Fiction*, 118 ff., Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, ix, 95 ff., Penzer, op. cit., i, 129 ff., may also be consulted. The best and fullest study is that by Ruth Norton.²

¹ *Mandla District Gazetteer* (Bombay, 1912), 28.

² 'The Life-Index: a Hindu Fiction-Motif' in *Studies in Honor of Maurice Bloomfield* (New Haven, 1920), 211-224.

She distinguishes :

1. The Active Index
2. The Passive Index
3. The Chastity Index

The Active Index

The Active Index probably arose from dreams which impressed upon primitive man the belief that his soul is something detachable from his body. During sleep his soul goes out to seek adventure and what it sees is a dream. From this it is an easy step to the idea that the soul may be permanently deposited in some object such as a bird, a fruit or a tree which can be kept in a safe place, thus allowing its possessor to take more risks in ordinary life than would normally be possible. The advantages of this idea to the story-teller are obvious. In the first place it greatly extends the scope of the risks that the hero himself may take. In the second, it provides a ready-made quest on which the hero must embark in order to find and to destroy his enemies.

The Passive Index

The Passive Index, which is said to be rare in Hindu literature (Norton gives only one reference, to the *Jataka* tale No. 506), is more common in the oral tales. The Passive is almost the opposite of the Active Index. Anything done to the Active Index affects the owner; anything done to the owner affects the Passive Index; that is to say, a hero going out on a journey leaves with his wife or friends some object which will reveal his condition by changing its nature. Thus in a Santal tale, a cow gives her calf a pail of milk and tells her that she is going out into danger and that if the milk turns red like blood, it will be a sign that she has been killed.¹ So too in *The Orient Pearls* the hero gives his follower a sword telling him that if at any time he sees blood exuding from it, he will know him to be in danger and must come to his assistance.² Champa Dal's mother gives him a small gold vessel containing some of the milk from her own breast and tells him that if the milk gets slightly red he will know that his father has been killed and if very red that she herself has been killed.³

Many other references might be given, but these will suffice.

The Chastity Index

The Chastity Index resembles the Passive Index. Here some object is left with either husband or wife and by its condition the faithfulness of the other party can be estimated. This must be distinguished from the Chastity Test which I discuss in another chapter.

¹ Bompas, 321.

² Devi, 156.

³ Day, 71.

The Chastity Index appears to be more common in Western literature than in India. Penzer has discussed the motif¹ but has given no examples from Indian folk-literature. They are actually rare. I can add one example from a Bhuiya folk-tale. A newly-married couple who found it difficult to make both ends meet decided that the husband should go to work in a distant town. Since he naturally objected to leaving his young wife alone, she wove a wreath of flowers and gave it to him saying, 'Keep this with you; as long as you find it keeping fresh, so long you may be sure that my chastity will remain intact.' In spite of the solicitations of the Raja, the girl remained faithful and the wreath of flowers kept always fresh.²

In our stories there is a unique example of the hero going to examine his future wife's Life-Index to see if it is in good order and properly preserved, rather in the same way that the villain of so many detective stories goes to Somerset House to discover the exact financial position of his future wife.

Penzer believes that the idea of the External Soul or Life-Index is 'of very old conception and is widely embedded in the customs and superstitions of numerous peoples of the world. This idea arose independently to a large extent and no one nation can be definitely said to have "created" it as is proved by its existence in remote corners of the globe such as New Zealand'.³ Norton concludes: 'One fact is conspicuous. The motif belongs to folklore and not primarily to literature.'⁴

NOTE 5

In the Belly of a Fish

This theme of the hero or heroine being swallowed by a fish from whose belly there is an ultimate deliverance is, of course, known throughout the world and goes far back into antiquity. The legend of Jonah is probably the most famous, but Lucian's story⁵ of the fish which swallows a ship whereupon the crew discover countries in the monster's interior, establish frontiers, and pursue a policy of annexation is the most finished and humorous.

Similar tales are common in India. In Stokes's tale,⁶ Laili lives for twelve years inside a fish; in Knowles's 'Bride Abased', the king lives in a fish's belly for years until he is at last rescued by a potter with his axe. In another Kashmir tale,⁷ resembling the story told of Polycrates by Herodotus, the fish swallows a ring. In a Ho tale,⁸ the hero escapes a tiger by hiding in a mango, a parrot carries off the mango, drops it in a tank and a fish swallows it. After some time

¹ Penzer, i, 165-168.

² Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, 271.

³ Penzer, i, 132.

⁴ Norton, 224.

⁵ *Vera Historia*, Book I.

⁶ Stokes, xiv.

⁷ In *Indian Antiquary*, xv, 157.

⁸ Halder, 'Ho Folk-lore' in *J.B.O.R.S.*, ii, 299.

when the dry season comes an old woman catches the fish, removes the hero and adopts him as her son.

Crooke suggests that this theme may have something to do with the idea of the Life-Index¹ according to which, as we have seen, there would be nothing incongruous in a person or part of him being lodged inside a bird or fish for some considerable time.

NOTE 6

The Liver in Folklore

The liver is everywhere regarded as a very important part of the body and personality. 'The Kamlarri ate the heart and liver of a brave man in order to obtain his courage. In Uganda, the liver is regarded as the seat of the soul and by eating the liver one may improve one's powers.'² So in central India witches try to remove the livers of their victims. Bompas describes how a witch tried to remove the liver of her own nephew.³ In Bastar a small bit of the liver of an animal killed in the chase is offered to the local gods and to the dead. In ordinary sacrifices also, after the blood of the slain animal has been sprinkled before the god an incision is made in its side, and a part of the liver is removed and offered. The rest of the liver is the perquisite of the sacrificing priest.

NOTE 7

Ogres and Demons

Hindu mythology distinguishes many different types of ogre and demon but in the stories of this book the stage is mainly filled by the Rakshasa. These terrible beings whose very name means 'the destroyers' (*rākshas*, an injury) are terrifying in appearance and unpleasant in habits. A Baiga tale describes how when a Rakshasa opens his mouth the upper lip reaches to heaven while the chin rests on earth. From Vedic times they have been described as deformed with slit-like eyes and poisonous finger-nails. Parvati gave them the power to reach maturity at birth.⁴ The Rakshasa, says Temple, 'occupies almost exactly the position in Indian tales that the ogre does in European story, and for the same reason, as he represents the memory of the savage tribes along the old Aryan borders.'⁵

Crooke's admirable account describes many famous Rakshasas and their activities.⁶ It must be noted that their unpleasant cannibal and necrophilic habits represent only one side of their nature. They have another. They are usually immensely rich and appear to be

¹ Crooke, ii, 254.

² Bompas, 421. Cf. Parker, ii, 211.

³ Steel and Temple, *Tales of the Punjab*, 310.

⁴ Crooke, i, 138. See also i, 262.

⁵ Penzer, i, 204.

⁶ Crooke, i, 246.

interested in art. An old temple at Ramtek near Nagpur, which is built of huge stones carefully fitted together without mortar, is said to have been built by Hemad Pant, the Rakshasa, and many other build-ings, such as Lohaban in Mathura and Baliya in Pilibhit, are the result of their work. They are strongly anti-puritan and love disturbing Sadhus at their prayers. Their final virtue is that nearly always they have a number of very pretty daughters.

NOTE 8

The Forbidden North

Stories in which the hero is forbidden to go in a certain direction are represented in this Chapter by No. 7 where the north is the area under taboo. In the Bengali tale of the Silver Tree, the hero is allowed to go to all the four points of the compass, but not to their furthest corner.¹ The north is forbidden in another Bengali story, 'The Man who wished to be Perfect', in Day's collection.² The hero, of course, invariably breaks the taboo and his consequent adventures advance the plot. In the Santal tale of 'The Ferryman' the hero is warned by his wife not to go towards the south. He resists the temptation thus created for a time, but at last goes to the south where, after helping a cow and a buffalo, he pulls a man out of a well and gets pushed in himself. His wife finally rescues him.³

It is interesting to find the association here (as in the text) of going in a forbidden direction with falling down a well. In Damant's story also, when the hero goes to the forbidden westernmost corner of the land, he has an adventure in a well.

NOTE 9

The 'Overhearing' Motif

Bloomfield thought that this motif would figure large 'as one of the most common and prized devices of stories' in his future Encyclopaedia of Hindu Fiction.⁴ Its intention is by allowing the hero to overhear persons, magical objects or most commonly birds 'to save from death, disease or catastrophe; to procure fairy-tale wealth and success; or to furnish helpful information or instruction in perplexing situations'. The motif is generally what is called 'progressive'. It is rarely the main theme of the story, but it is a very valuable way of advancing the plot in circumstances where the usual means of imparting information to the characters by letters, newspapers or messages are not available.

¹ Trans. by Damant in *Indian Antiquary*, i, 115 ff.

² Day, 190.

³ Bompas, 293. See also *Wide-Awake Stories*, 27, 85, 98 and Stokes, 153.

⁴ Bloomfield, 'On Overhearing as a Motif of Hindu Fiction' in *The American Journal of Philology*, xli, 309.

Most commonly it is a bird which is overheard, and there are some examples of this in the text. 'On the whole the conversation of birds is the standard source of information. "A little bird told me" seems to be the rock bottom of the notion founded on the sincere folklore feeling that the chirp and twitter of birds is the prime and natural source of otherwise inaccessible information',¹ and Bloomfield goes on to point out that in literary fiction it is specially the parrot and the maina who often make a pair, the parrot chanting like a Brahmin with a belly full of curd and rice and the maina chattering like a housemaid who has been noticed by someone.²

Parallels could be multiplied but there is no need to give them here since the subject has been treated so fully by Bloomfield.

NOTE 10

The Child Promised to a Sadhu

This motif appears in Story 7 of this Chapter and in a different form in Chapter XXII, 2, where to satisfy his wife's pregnancy-craving for mushrooms, a man promises his unborn daughter to a snake. In Chapter IV, there is a rather different version of the motif: an old couple betroth their daughter to a Raksa and then try to deceive him in order to escape a disastrous marriage. It is universal for the family which makes such promises to try to get out of their bargain. At first sight one would say that here was a typical aboriginal situation, for always the Gond or Baiga makes arrangements for excessive expenditure, borrows money to meet it and then spends years in trying to escape the consequences of his rashness. But actually this theme is a familiar folk-tale cliché. It goes back to the *Jataka* tales and the *Divyavadana*.³

The motif is often associated with an unusual form of birth. In a Santal story a childless Raja is tricked by a Jogi into promising to give him his child if one is born. The Jogi prescribes a diet of mangoes, and when the youngest Rani bears twin sons, claims them both.⁴

This type of adoption never pays. In every case the hero murders his foster-parent and returns home. But the cliché is a very useful means of getting the hero away from his family and of subjecting him to various ordeals before he can win through to happiness.

¹ Ibid., 311.

² Bloomfield, 'On Talking Birds in Hindu Fiction' in *Festschrift für Ernst Windisch* (Leipzig, 1914), 353.

³ See *J.B.O.R.S.*, xii, 584.

⁴ Bompas, 135.

NOTE 11

Restoration to Life

There are many different ways by which the hero who is so unfortunate as to be temporarily killed by his adversary can be restored to life. In Chapter I, 1, a magic dhoti collects the scattered bones of the dead hero, lays itself upon them and restores their life. In Chapters II, 6, II, 8, and III, 3, we have a magic stick that has the power of raising men from the dead. In Chapters V, 4, and XVIII, 2, however, it is the *amrit-pani*, or water of immortality, that is sprinkled upon the bones of the dead after they have been collected together, and restores them to life. This water also has the power of restoring youth.

Another common method of restoring life to the dead is to put a cloth folded seven times beneath the corpse or a collection of its bones and to cover it with another cloth also folded seven times. The power of the seven-folded cloth is seen in the Bengali story of the Silver Tree.¹

An interesting motif which is widely distributed is the power of the mongoose to restore life to the dead. In Chapter I, 5 the mongoose brings medicine from the jungle and in Chapter XV, 8, there is a curious incident where the hero's father dies of snake-bite. A mongoose kills the snake, but not before it itself has been bitten. It goes to a *phang* tree, sniffs at it and recovers. The hero also goes to the *phang* tree and digs up the root. He grinds it small and stuffs some of it into his father's nostrils. He takes the nose in his mouth and blows with all his might. Then as the wind goes into his father's body, he recovers.

The people of India, says Clouston, 'have an idea that when the mongoose, in its encounter with a snake, happens to be bitten by it, it immediately runs off in search of an antidote to counteract the virulent poison of the snake. This supposed antidote, the root of a plant, hence called snake-root, is regarded by all classes of the natives as a certain specific against snake-bite'.²

We do not find in the central Indian stories the method of restoration which is said to be common by Temple in *Legends of the Punjab*. This is 'usually restoration by effigy—the ashes or bones of the dead being collected and made into an image into which life is breathed'.³

¹ Trans. by Damant in *Indian Antiquary*, i, 115-120.

² Clouston, ii, 181.

³ Temple, I, xvii. Temple has collected a number of different methods from the older folk-literature in *Tales of the Punjab*, 380 f.

NOTE 12

In Chapters I, II and V, 1, we find the incident of Parvati overhearing someone weeping on earth and going to help. In the first story, she hears the youngest brother weeping and is rebuked by Mahadeo for her curiosity. In the second, she sends first a crow and then a bee to find out what is the matter with the young hero who is mourning by the body of his father. This is simply one of the usual clichés of the folk-tale. It occurs in the Birhor tale of 'The Two Lovers', where the princess, holding the severed head and body of her dead lover in her arms, begins to wail piteously. Mahadeo and Parvati pass by on their way from the jungle where they had been cutting wood and Parvati expresses her desire to see what is the matter. Mahadeo pooh-poohs her saying, 'You women are always hearing people weeping and wailing, but there is nothing in it.' But Parvati insists on going to see and restores the dead man to life, thus bringing the tale to a happy conclusion.¹

In a Bhojapuri tale, a Brahmin who has been robbed of a magic bag sits on the bank of a river bewailing his hard lot. Shankar and Parvati hear his cries and give him another bag which brings him to success and happiness.²

¹ Roy, *The Birhors*, 461.

² U. N. Tiwari, 'A Dialect of Bhojapuri', *J.B.O.R.S.*, Appendix to Parts I and III, xxi.

KINGS AND BATTLES

THE stories in this Chapter are examples, collected in the Mandla, Balaghat and Seoni Districts, of the tales chanted by the Pardhan Dasondhi when they go out on the singing and begging expeditions which I have already described in the Introduction. The songs chanted are of three kinds—Pandawani, Gondwani and Ramayana. As their names imply, the first and third are Hindu legends from the great epics, generally much mutilated in the telling and interspersed with many ribald incidents. The Gondwani tales, which are still the most popular, are those represented here.

The admirable tale of Mara Kshattri reflects the day when hawk-hunting was known in Mandla as it still is in Bastar. Throughout the stories history and legend are inextricably mixed. The forts of Chanda and Chauragarh were once historic centres of Gond power and prosperity. Story 7, like Story 8—a Baiga tale which I have included for comparison—gives a fantastic account of the Gond Rajas. But Prem Narayan and his son Hirde Shah are historic persons, and the story is right in its references to their relations with the Imperial Moghul court at Delhi. Hirde Shah built the fine Palace at Ramnagar, twelve miles from Mandla Town. But it was not against the Emperor that he fought, but against Jhujhar Singh who killed his father by treachery at Chauragarh.

It is interesting to find in Stories 5 and 8 faint echoes of the Lingo legend. The wife of Singhisurwa is called Lingarani and the godling who saved Hirde Shah during his romantic adventures in Delhi was Rai Linga.

I

THE STORY OF MARA KSHATTRI

*A Raj-Neghi Pardhan Gondwani tale from Patangarh,
Mandla District*

There were two brothers, the elder was Chechan Siri Mara Kshattri, the younger was Hirakhan Kshattri. Mara had a hawk named Karidhawar. Its body was golden and Mara loved it greatly. This hawk lived in its cage for twelve years; then one day it said

in its mind, 'My master is a drunkard; that is why I am not allowed out of the cage.' So thinking it began to cry. At midnight, Mara heard the hawk's voice, and asked, 'O Karidhawar, I feed you with ghee, spoonfuls of it, and laddu-sweets of channa-pulse. What is troubling you that you are weeping?'

The bird replied, 'You treat me like a thief and rascal. Day and night I am kept in this jail. Take me out to hunt sometimes at least.'

Mara thought to himself, 'This bird is right.' So next morning he called Siktamahangu the Kotwar and said, 'Proclaim by beat of drum to all my kingdom, that everyone who has a hunting hawk should bring his bird to Lilarangi the plain, and there hunt with Karidhawar.' The Kotwar took his timki drum and spread the news abroad.

They all came to the Palace on their big horses, and Mara Kshattri came out on his elephant. But Siktamahangu had nothing to ride on and came on his feet wearing his best clothes, a red cap, a red shirt and red pyjamas. When he saw everyone riding, he determined to be mounted on something and at last found a hyena and rode on that. When the hyena saw the great company it barked *ror ror*, and tried to throw the Kotwar from its back.

When the party started for the hunting-ground, the horses kicked up so much dust that it reached the Upper World. Only those in front could get clean water, the others had to be content with muddy water. In eight days and nine nights they reached Lilarangi the plain. While the Raja was speaking a single sentence, in so short a time the tents were up.

In the plain Lilarangi, Kanwalawa the Quail was ridden by its god and all the birds collected round it. '*Ochha ochha*,' he said. 'That Buffalo-Gond Raja is coming here with all the hawks in his kingdom, and when they are let loose on this plain they will eat us up like a disease. Not one will escape. So let us hide in streams, in pits, in hollows. None should fly out till I your *gunia* (magician) fly. To save you I will throw my magic. When they don't see us here, they will weary of the hunt and will go back disappointed.'

When the tents were pitched and all was ready, Mara Kshattri said, 'Let us rest today, but tomorrow at the time of the dying sun we will begin.' Next day the hawks were taken out, all of them save golden Karidhawar. They searched everywhere, but could find

nothing. The oldest and cleverest caught a few partridges, but the birds turned into pebbles or sticks as they caught them and fell from their beaks to the ground. All the hawks could bring home were a few feathers, and when they dropped these before their masters they flew away like the cotton threads of the semur tree. Mara Kshattri was very angry. 'Keep your hawks now in their cages, and I will send out Karidhawar. I will not have anyone say that their hawks helped my bird. If anyone says so, I will cut off the tip of his tongue.'

But again he said, 'Take all your hawks in their cages right away from the borders of this plain.' Then he spoke to his bird, 'O Karidhawar, my honour is in your hands. If you come back without a partridge, I will fry you and eat you for my supper.'

Karidhawar flew straight up into the sky and searched in every stream and pit and hollow. But it could see nothing. On its third flight, it prayed to Bhagavan. As it prayed, it suddenly saw Kanwalawa the Quail-Magician measuring broomsticks for magic and saying, 'When will we be free of these destroyers?'

Down swooped Karidhawar and began to catch the birds. But every one turned into a pebble or twig and fell from its beak to the ground. Karidhawar said to Kanwalawa, 'I will catch you by the throat' and so saying increased his speed by twelve kos. All its efforts now were to catch Kanwalawa.

The Raja was watching the contest anxiously, and every minute fire blazed up within him. Then he set fire to the grass of the plain. This made Kanwalawa fly into the air, and when they saw their magician fly all the other quail flew up also. But still when the hawk caught them, each turned into stick or pebble and fell safely to the ground.

Now the hawk said to itself, 'What a treacherous fellow am I! Here I have fed on ghee, spoonfuls of it, and laddu-sweets made of channa-pulse, yet I cannot catch a single bird.' So thinking in its mind it began to fly towards the Chandagarh Raj. The Raja, full of anger, followed it.

Now in Chandagarh, the Raja Katsungha ruled. He had a daughter and her name was Machhal Rano. This daughter was sitting on a field-platform looking after her gram field and driving away the birds. Karidhawar flew down and sat by her side. She recognized it as the golden bird of Mara Kshattri. She caught it

and took it to the Palace. She fed it on spoonfuls of ghee and laddu-sweets of channa-pulse.

Just after they had gone, the Raja Mara Kshattri came to the field-platform and lay down weary upon it.

Machhal Rano's Lamsena was ploughing near by and when he saw the Raja on the field-platform he was filled with jealousy and came to the place and asked him who he was. That Lamsena's name was Maha Singh. He did not believe the Raja's story and shouted angrily, 'You seducer of my sister, don't you know that I am the Lamsena? Don't you know that I grow oil-seed on stony ground? Don't you know that I can fill a kuro-measure with one grain at a time? Don't you know that I am able to receive five arrows on my chest and take no harm? I have now done a year and a half year working for my wife. I keep her always under my very eyes. Why were you sitting by her side on the platform? I am sure those faithless parents-in-law of mine sent for you.'

So saying Maha Singh shot his arrow at him. Mara Kshattri calls on his seventeen hundred Singhi and fourteen hundred Chittawar. 'How dare he do such a thing to me?' He calls on the nine hundred Jogini and the eighteen hundred Mohini, and sends them to attack Maha Singh. 'How dare he do such a thing to me?'

Then Mara Kshattri's army attacked. They struck at Maha Singh's gift of walking; then one, Chhatboj, attacked his chest and became a weight upon it; another caught the strength of his arms; a fourth destroyed the sight of his eyes; a fifth made soft the hardness of his skull. Mara Kshattri shouted at them, 'Kill him, kill him.' But the gods had mercy on him, and said to Maha Singh, 'If you wish to save yourself, leave this place and run away.' Maha Singh said, 'Am I not the son of a Kshattri and can I not receive the weight of eighteen arrows in my body? They will say, if I die without cause, he had no fever and he died of himself.' Thus saying, he dragged himself towards the Palace.

All the time, Mara Kshattri was saying, 'I want my hawk which your Princess has taken away. From her I will take back my bird and a fine as well.' At last they reached the Palace, and there was the Raja in his Darbar. With him was the Diwan, the Dau, the Lala, the Lallu, the Jagdhar, the Kirchul, the Parihar. When the Raja saw the fighting outside, he said, 'Who is this? What is the matter?' Mara Kshattri could not speak plainly, and gave a hot

reply. 'Who is that fellow who watches your gram field? He has stolen my hawk. I want my hawk back and compensation.'

The Raja said, 'And who are you?' Mara Kshattri said, 'I am a hunter.' The Raja asked, 'Why are you quarrelling with everyone?' Mara Kshattri said, 'I was washing my face in the river and my hawk flew from me and sat by your daughter. She caught it and brought it to the Palace.'

From the attic Machhal Rano was listening to all that passed. Thinking, thinking, she said in her mind, 'O Bhagavan, if only I could be married to this man!' Mara Kshattri looked up and saw her, and shouted, 'Look, there she is. That's the girl who stole my bird. Make her give my bird back and pay a fine as well. Otherwise I will take the girl with the bird back to my kingdom.'

Then all the Darbar shouted, 'This is a foolish fellow from the country; turn him out.' But Mara Kshattri said again, 'Give me my bird and my fine.' At that the Darbar people, seeing that he took no notice of them, began to be afraid. 'Who can he be?' they said.

The Raja said, 'Do not shout uselessly in this manner. Go to the great gate of the Palace and read what is written there, then go back to your village.'

Mara Kshattri went to the great gate of the Palace and read what was written there. *He alone can marry Machhal Rano who can grow oil-seed on stony ground and measure it grain by grain in a kuro-measure. He must have five kuro-measures of gold mohurs and bear the weight of five arrows in his chest.*

Mara Kshattri came back and said, 'I do not know how to read or write, but I want my hawk and the fine.' He said, 'Go and ask your daughter where she found my bird.' So the Raja sent five soldiers to the girl to ask what had happened. They came back and said, 'The Rajkumari says, "I have kept this bird from its childhood. I feed it and at night let it rest in my mouth." ' When Mara Kshattri heard this, he laughed and said to the Raja, 'If the hawk belongs to me, it will sit on the sharp point of my arrow. Let it be put to the proof.'

Then came Machhal Rano with the hawk. She begged it not to go to Mara Kshattri. But when Mara called it, it flew straight to the arrow and sat on its sharp point. Then said Mara Kshattri, 'O Raja, I have proved this bird to be mine. I take it away, but give me compensation.'

Then came Maha Singh and said, 'When this fellow came, I was ploughing on stony ground. He frightened away my buffaloes and broke my plough. Let him give me compensation.'

Mara Kshattri said, 'Get out, or you'll get into trouble. Let the Raja give me my hawk and compensation and before I leave this kingdom I will give you something.' When the Darbar heard this quarrel and saw the conduct of Mara Kshattri, they began to think that he himself was a Raja. They said to the Raja, 'Let the Rajkumari now choose her husband.'

Now the Rajkumari was already in love with Mara Kshattri. The Raja said, 'Go and try to read what is written on the gate.' Mara Kshattri said, 'The writing will be just the same as when I first went there. I cannot read nor could my fathers read.' At last they wearied of him and said, 'Take your bird and your fine and go away.'

But Mara Kshattri said, 'Let the Rajkumari first tell me why she caught my bird.' They were now over-weary, so they sent a Munshi to explain things to him. But Mara Kshattri abused him and sent him away, 'What is the use of your learning? You can't teach me anything.' So the Munshi went away.

Then came the Kotwar and asked, 'Maharaj, where have you come from?' 'I am no Maharaj, I am an ordinary man.' 'But where do you stay, master?' 'I am a master, that is true, for I live on the earth and not in heaven.' Then came Maha Singh and they began to quarrel again. The Rajkumari was watching and said in her mind, 'O if only Mara Kshattri wins and marries me!'

Maha Singh said, 'I had to spend eight days and nine nights making my plough; you have broken it; you must pay me for it.' Mara Kshattri said, 'Very well, I will give you what you want. But I want to speak privately to the Rajkumari.'

The Darbar said, 'Let the Rajkumari choose which of these she will marry.' It was decided that she should sit on an elephant and put her garland on whichever she preferred. Maha Singh, fearing that she would put it on Mara Kshattri, went secretly to the elephant and said, 'O elephant, if the Rajkumari puts the garland on me, I will give you double the food the Raja gives you; but if she doesn't and you see her putting it round that fellow's neck, run away into the jungle, and marry the girl yourself.'

Next morning, all the people came, and the Rajkumari in her best clothes mounted the elephant, the garland in her hand. Everyone

said to the Kotwar, 'You have the right to advise the Rajkumari. Say to her; you know these two men. Maha Singh has worked for you for a year and a half, the other has worked for a day and a half.' But the Raja said, 'Do whatever you like.' Machhal Rano said to herself, 'If I put this garland at once on Mara, they will laugh at me. They will say she left her first man at once.' So when she came near she threw the garland from afar, but it went straight round the neck of Mara Kshattri. But Mara Kshattri abused the garland saying, 'You wretched garland, the elephant is standing in front of Maha Singh, yet you come to me.'

Then the people said, 'Perhaps there is a mistake. Let it be done again.' Three times they tried. But each time the garland fell on Mara Kshattri's neck.

When Machhal Rano threw the garland for the third time round Mara Kshattri's neck, the elephant rushed as if it were mad into the forest. Running, running it crossed the great Asasund Mountain, and the Binj Pahar Hills. As it went, Machhal Rano dropped her bangles, her hair-band, her ear-rings, and even little torn-off bits of her sari. When nothing was left, she looked down and said, 'But the elephant leaves its great footmarks.'

At last they reached Chhatapatpar, where there was no earth but only rock. Maha Singh, with the Raja's army, followed them to this point, but then there were no more tracks and after searching in vain, he returned home. After eight days and nine nights, the elephant reached the shore of the great sea. It said to the sea, 'O brother, be merciful to me and take me over, lest my enemies come and kill me here.' The sea showed mercy on it, and took it across.

Beyond the sea was the kingdom of elephants where lived eighty lakhs of elephants. The elephant now asked Machhal Rano to marry it. She replied, 'You have been fed and nurtured by my father, so you have become my brother; how can I marry you?' But the elephant said, 'No, I must marry you.' So she said, 'For twelve years I cannot marry. Wait till then and after that time I will marry you.'

Meanwhile in the Palace, the Raja was in great distress. He sent for all the Pandits and made them read in their books to see where the Rajkumari had gone. These were not ordinary Pandits, they were great Pandits; their books were spread long as dhoties of nine hands. By the help of their books they could count the stars in the

sky and grains of sand in the river and know the number of seeds in a pumpkin.

'O Raja', they said, 'these elephants are really men and they have a great kingdom beyond the seven seas.' The Raja sat in thought for a long time, but the Pandits said, 'Do not be afraid; your daughter is still living.' Then said the Raja in his mind, 'Only he who is searching for her as his bride will save her. I will give her to whoever brings her home.'

Then said Mara Kshattri, 'O Raja, do not be afraid. If I fire my arrow to the Upper World, it will burn the sky; if I fire it down to the Lower World, it will pierce it through and through; the third arrow will kill a lakh of soldiers and return to me.' When Maha Singh heard this he said to himself, 'Let him search and bring her back, but I'll never let her leave the boundaries of this kingdom.'

Mara Kshattri set out and in eight days and nine nights he reached the shores of the great sea. Here there were no elephant tracks, but he called on the ocean saying, 'O brother, take me over, and I will feed you for twelve years.' The sea replied, 'Brother, how can I do so, for you are a man who is half sin and half merit. The worms and flies within my boundary will devour you.'

Mara Kshattri, disappointed, went to a crocodile in a corner of the sea. The crocodile said, 'If you have strength of desire, you will be able to cross. But first go and serve that akabar tree'. Mara went and sat quietly by the great banyan. In the branches of the tree sat a Warrior Vulture; there were twelve young ones in the nest. Daily it went out to get its food. While it was away Pahar Chitti, the she-cobra, used to climb up and eat the young ones. When Mara Kshattri went there the cobra was on her way. As she climbed the tree, the young ones began to cry loudly. When Mara saw her, he cried, 'Who is that? Beware what you do.' The cobra was frightened, for never in her life had she been asked such a question. With one arrow, Mara Kshattri cut the cobra into seven pieces. The vulture's young ones were very pleased, and called him into the tree, and there he told them his story. When the mother came back and saw her young she was glad, but she wanted to kill Mara. But the young ones stopped her, and told her his story. She said she would help him to cross. The crocodile was willing to carry him over. 'But I must eat half your body.' Mara Kshattri promised him other gifts instead, and the crocodile said, 'Very well then, I won't eat you.'

It took him on its back. Half way across, it opened its mouth and put out its tongue to eat half of Mara Kshattri. But the vulture was flying above and swooped down and cut off half its tongue. And still today the crocodile has only half a tongue.

As Mara Kshattri reached the distant shore, and left the crocodile, he said, 'Don't be afraid. On my way back I will give you many elephants. Wait here for me.' Then Mara went on to the place where the elephants lived. They all had gone out to graze; only Machhal Rano was there and the hawk flying above her. When it saw its master it flew with joy to Machhal Rano and said, 'O elder sister, my brother-in-law has come.'

Machhal Rano said to Mara Kshattri, 'Why have you come? If the elephants find you here they will kill you. But we will both die together.' Mara Kshattri said, 'Somehow or other hide me, only save my life.' Machhal Rano threw black and yellow rice over him and turned him into a fly. So passed many days. When the elephants came, Mara Kshattri lived as a fly; when they went out to feed, he became a man. 'How long must I live like a thief in prison? Find some way for our escape.' So said Mara Kshattri.

One day when the elephants came home, Machhal Rano said to their leader, 'It is now many years since I saw my grandmother and I feel lonely for her. The journey will take me six months, but you could do it in six days. Won't you go and take her a message from me?' The elephant took all the elephants with him and went to find the grandmother. As soon as they had gone, Mara Kshattri with Machhal Rano and Karidhawar went to where the crocodile was waiting for them. But as they were talking to the crocodile, the elephants returned and found the Princess had gone. At once they began to make for the shore of the sea.

When they heard the noise of the elephants approaching, Mara Kshattri begged the crocodile to take them quickly. 'I will feed you on the best food in the world, picking out each morsel. And when you bring the elephants, bring them one by one.' The crocodile took them half way and there was a dry spot where it left them. The crocodile went back for the elephants, and brought them over one by one. As each came near, Mara Kshattri killed it. Then the other elephants were afraid. 'How can you take them over so quickly?' 'There are many of my friends over there, and they carry them the rest of the way.'

When it was the turn of Baora Hathi, the royal elephant, Mara Kshattri said, 'Take this arrow, you traitor', and killed it. When all the elephants were dead, Mara Kshattri said, 'Here is your food for twelve years.' The crocodile said, 'Not only for me but for my children and grandchildren for the rest of our lives.' Then it took them to the shore.

Thus with toil and weariness and joy, they went on to Machhal Rano's home. First they sent a message that they were coming. When Maha Singh heard this, he took eighty lakhs of soldiers to fight against Mara Kshattri. 'I will kill him and marry Machhal Rano.'

When they met Maha Singh shouted from afar, 'Oho, you seducer of my sister, you are the villain that ran away with my wife.' Mara Kshattri grew red with anger, but all he said was, 'Get out of my way, and let me pass.' Maha Singh said, 'Why do you talk at a distance; approach and fight.' At this Mara Kshattri brought out his bow and arrow. The clouds thundered and the earth quaked. But Maha Singh was not afraid, he kept on talking.

In the meanwhile Katsungha, father of Machhal Rano, arrived and said, 'This is not the place to fight. Come all of you to the city and there we will decide what is to be done.' So, quarrelling all along the road, they reached the city. Maha Singh said, 'I will take the girl by force and marry her, for I have served for her for a year and a half.' Mara Kshattri said, 'I will cut you into three pieces if you so much as stand on her shadow.'

Then thought the Raja, 'I promised this girl to Maha Singh. He has fulfilled the conditions written on the gate. I must keep my word and marry her to him.' Therefore he said to them both, 'I will give my daughter to the man who will bear five arrows in his chest.' Maha Singh got ready and covered his chest with an iron plate. The Raja fired five arrows at him and they did no harm. Hearing this Mara Kshattri was angry and said, 'They have deceived me; let him stand and take one arrow from my bow for the five he has had from the Raja.'

When Mara Kshattri fired his arrow, it pierced the iron shield over Maha Singh's body and came out the other side. Maha Singh went straight to the abode of Bhagavan.

Mara Kshattri was still angry and spoke hotly to the Raja. 'What do you want with me now?' The Raja was afraid and said, 'Son,

spare me. Marry my daughter. I will give you twelve rent-free villages and feed you all my life.'

Mara Kshattri cut off Maha Singh's head and hung it by the gate and ordered that every time anyone went in or out he was to hit it five times with his shoe.

Then came the time for Mara Kshattri's marriage. There was oil on the first day, omens on the second day, the booth on the third day, circumambulation on the fourth. When the marriage was over, the Raja plotted how to destroy Mara Kshattri. From Chandagarh to Bhairagarh, where Mara Kshattri had his kingdom, there was a road. Raja Katsungha ordered his people to make two traps—for whoever went bending down a drop trap, and for whoever went standing a noose trap.

Before the orders came there were traps made everywhere. Chandagarh was such a city that you could not push a straight pole anywhere, there were so many people; only a crooked pole would go. When Mara Kshattri left the city to return to his own kingdom and saw the traps everywhere, he was frightened. But he called on the eight hundred Singhi and nine hundred Chittawar to clear the way for him, and he went on in safety.

At the end of the kingdom of Chandagarh there was a village of eighty lakhs of Chamar, and of these nine hundred were witches. These nine hundred Chamarin rained stones and dry bones on Mara Kshattri, but the Singhi and Chittawar took him safely through, turning the missiles into earth and driving them back. The Chamarin said to the Raja, 'What can we do? What land does this man belong to?' But the Raja was angry and cried, 'Somehow or other you must kill him.' So the Chamarin sent poisoned mosquitoes and a host of hornets to attack him. Mara Kshattri with his wife and the hawk was riding on the horse Benduli. It said, 'My son, don't be afraid. As long as you do not get off my back, no one can make a hair of your body crooked.'

At last they escaped the witches. As they were going on their way they met an old Koshta, cross-eyed and lame, watching his field. His old woman used to bring twelve pots of water and gruel to the field every day. She was as strong as twelve buffaloes. 'Who are you, son?' asked the old woman. 'What business is it of yours that you should talk to me?' She said, 'Bring me a pot of water from that stream.' He was angry at that. He leant over and picked her up

with all her pots and put her in her field. This pleased the old woman and she said, 'Son, you will safely reach your country. No evil will happen to you.'

Then Mara Kshattri drew near his kingdom. At midnight there was an earthquake. The Kotwar of Bhairagarh thought, 'This must be my master returning after twelve years.' He ran to tell the Vazir. 'What is the news, Kotwar, and why is the earth trembling?' 'Mara Kshattri certainly is coming. I will go to the city and tell the people.' All the people came with pots and lights to welcome their Raja. But they asked the Kotwar, 'Did you get some letter or are you jumping about on your own?' The Kotwar ran to the Vazir's house, but the Vazir had gone to the Kotwar's house. In the Vazir's house, the Vazir's wife was all alone. When the Kotwar saw her, he said, 'Don't you know I have just caught your husband with a woman?' She was angry and abused her husband. But the Kotwar said, 'Never mind. Your husband is with a woman there; but I have come here.' The Kotwar went in to embrace her, and then went away to greet the Raja. When the Vazir came in, she told her husband everything. The Vazir thought in his mind, 'Very well, I will see this Kotwar's wife.' He went to the Kotwar's house and said, 'Your husband is a great rascal; he is always going to other women. When he comes in today, pretend a god is riding on you and then your husband will call for me.' She did as the Vazir said. When he came he sent the Kotwar to call all the magicians, and once the husband was well away took his revenge.

Next day came a real message that the Raja was coming; who was so happy as the Kotwar? 'While you sleep, I have to keep watch over the four corners of the world.' Now again all the people went out to receive their Raja. After that Chechan Siri Mara Kshattri and his Rani Machhal Rano, with their hawk Karidhawar, lived in happiness and ruled the kingdom.

2

THE SONG OF HIRAKHAN KSHATTRI

*A Raj-Neghi Pardhan Gondwani tale from Patangarh,
Mandla District*

THE PARDHAN: Bara Deo ! Thakur Deo Sumarni ! Khair Sumarni !
Brothers, what shall I sing?

THE ASSEMBLED GOND: Sing the song of Hirakhan¹ Kshattri.

THE PARDHAN: Listen, brothers !

Usar's son was Busar.

Busar's son was Karikhan.

Karikhan's son was Singhisurwa.

Singhisurwa's eldest son was Marakhan Kshattri.

Singhisurwa's youngest son was Hirakhan Kshattri.

When Hirakhan was born, his father called a woman to cut the cord. But as she came his father died, and Hirakhan said to the woman, 'O mother, I am but a baby, yet I have become an orphan. I am the babe of my mother, whelp of my father, soldier of soldiers, jungly of the jungle, great bull of the herd, lord of the wild buffaloes.'

When Hirakhan grew up, he used to go hunting with sixteen kinds of adornment, twelve kinds of arrows, and his swords Telmartaluwa, Bhaisamargurda and Tegamarsirohi.² On his body he wore a coat of mail, and above it a turban, above that a winding of string, and above all the iron helm Pilhivakhtar.³ So adorned, he prepared Giradwal the Horse, and went to hunt in Bhairagarh, calling his subjects to go with him.

They killed a deer and brought it home. Next time he sent away his people, and went alone to the kingdom of Raiyya Sindola. His horse was thirsty. There was a lake and he took it to drink there.

In that lake the daughter of Tapsiriya, the girl called Kamal Hiro, was bathing with her companions. Hirakhan saw her and loved her. Kamal Hiro saw him and loved him. Hirakhan said, 'O girl, whose daughter are you? My love, my sweet bird, I could eat you.'

¹ Hirakhan should not be mistaken for a Mussalman name: it means 'mine of diamonds'.

² The sword that can even destroy oil, the weapon that can kill a buffalo, the sirohi-sword that can defeat a tega-sword.

³ Probably a corruption of the Persian *jirah-wakhtar*, a suit of mail.

Kamal Hiro said, 'Deceiver, deceiver, I too love you, my Raja, I too long to eat you. I am the daughter of Tapsiriya Raja. Why have you come here? If my father comes, he will cut off your head and throw it away and make your eighteen forts desolate. He has twelve Rajas tied by the nose to a tethering-pole. Escape while you can. My father is coming soon.'

Hearing this, Hirakhan was frightened. He seized the girl and put her on his horse and rode away to his own house.

In Hiragarh there was great excitement, and plans were made for the marriage of Hirakhan and Kamal Hiro. They sent the Kotwar Maradlangha, father of Korbaser, to call the people for the wedding. 'On the eleventh day we will build the booth, on the twelfth day will be the circumambulation.' The Kotwar went and called the visitors. All was prepared.

They made a rope ten hands long of rotten grass for Hirakhan's waist-band and a khadi-cloth twelve hands long as his loin-cloth. They brought a great dhol drum carried by two men—its drumstick was thick as a man's arm—they beat it twice and put it down. The Kotwar said, 'I must beat the drum in eight villages before the sun goes down. Give me some gruel before I go.' The Malikin said, 'You have only been hungry since dawn, Maradlangha.' 'No, since last night I have been fasting.' 'Why did you get no food last night?' He said, 'Last night Manjhi Dokera's wife went for water: I had gone to relieve myself. They suspected us, and Korbaser's mother beat me, and after that I did not care for food. So now, Malikin, I am very hungry; give me food to eat.' She said, 'Well, sit down and eat.'

Maradlangha sat down and tied the girdle round his waist and put on the loin-cloth twelve hands long, with its flap hanging before and behind.

The Malikin put gruel in a leaf-cup and vegetable on a leaf; Maradlangha ate so much that his girdle broke. His loin-cloth fell down, he was naked, he ran away ashamed.

There were many children playing Chherta. Maradlangha said to them, 'O boys, tell my wife, Maradlangha is naked.' So saying he put one hand in front and the other behind and hid in a corner. He cried, 'O boys playing Chherta, go and tell Korbaser's mother that she should take food for the children from the Malikin's house.'

The boys went to call her, and she put on the sixteen-hands-long

khadi sari and went quickly crying, 'O Korbaser's father, where are you?' Maradlangha said, 'Come here.' She went in, but could not find him. Maradlangha said, 'Come further in.' At last she found him in the corner, and he pulled off her sari and dressed in it, and so went out.

He took the dhol drum and went along playing it, shouting, 'Come, come, all you people of the village, all you children. Come for the marriage of the Raja. Let the boys go to cut the wood for the booth and the girls come out to welcome them.'

But there was his wife, Korbaser's mother, naked in a corner. The boys begging for Chherta came and saw her. They cried, 'Look, today an old Raksin from the Raja's house is standing in the corner.' They stood staring at her. Some of them poked her buttocks. At that she came out and ran away all naked as she was. The children chased her, crying and frightened. When she reached her house, she found the door shut and locked.

There was a weaver's pit near by. Here she hid. A scorpion bit her backside and she began to scream. The weaver said to his children, 'Here is a mad woman; bring her into the house. Come along, let's take her from the pit.'

But Korbaser's mother said to the children, 'I am your own mother', and they ran away. She came out of the pit and found some clothes in the weaver's house and covered herself. The Kotwar brought Paniya Billo Dokera and they took the omens for the Raja. When Paniya Billo Dokera had done this, the boys went to cut the wood for the booth.

They called Mahangu and he cooked two basketsful of rice, seven pairs of sweetbreads, and went with them for the booth-branches. When he reached the jungle, the god climbed on Mahangu and the boys said, 'Tell us, tell us.' The god said, 'Mahangu himself must eat all the breads. If any of you eat them, a tiger will kill you.' The boys said, 'Let him have them all; we don't want to be eaten by a tiger.'

So they cut the wood for the marriage-booth, and put a dhumer branch on their shoulders and came singing,

'We cut the wood for the booth,

Above is the roof of sarai

And green bamboo.

A strange boy and girl are sitting thigh to thigh.'

3

ANOTHER SONG OF HIRAKHAN KSHATTRI

*A Raj-Neghi Pardhan Gondwani story from Baihar Tahsil,
Balaghat District*

In Hiragarh there lived Mara Kshattri. His eldest son was Baudandi, his wife was Jalabeli. Mara Kshattri's mother was Damalghaila. This Rani belonged to the kingdom of Raiyya Sindola. The kingdom of Hiragarh had lost much land to Raiyya Sindola, and father and son decided to recover it. At that time Damalghaila was four months pregnant. When they reached Raiyya Sindola the two Rajas were both killed in battle, and thus the two Ranis became widows.

After five months the Rani gave birth to a son, but died at that time. The midwife who came to cut the cord also died. Five other women who assisted also died. Sixty pairs of cows died. The boy was called Hirakhan Kshattri, and at his birth diamonds rained from the sky for two-and-a-half days. In ten years, looked after by Rani Jalabeli, he was grown up and learned, fit to rule a kingdom. He heard of his father's death in Raiyya Sindola. He prepared his weapons and mounted his horse Giradwal. He fought against the Raja of Raiyya Sindola and lit a lamp on his moustaches and threw him into a lake.

In this lake lived Tapsiriya. He had a daughter whose name was Kamal Hirawal. At that time she was six years old. Hirakhan carried her away to his kingdom and married her in her cradle. When she was old enough she wanted to visit her mother's house, but he did not permit it. But at last, when she made a lot of fuss, he had to take her there. He rode on his horse, but he made her walk. On the way she got so tired that her feet began to swell. He left her three kos behind, and she sat weeping in a cave tying rags round her feet.

On the way the Raja's Singhi reminded him that his wife was far behind. The names of the Singhi were Burinatiya, Baibarandol, and Kakra. There were also Churelin, Jaitbhal, Uranwaj, Manmohini, Garmibal and Striyabal. He told these to go back and bring his wife.

When they saw the girl so miserable, each of the spirits did its

special duty to make her happy and content. They took her to the Raja. She said, 'Let us go back.' But he said, 'I am a man; I cannot turn back.' But now he took her with him on the horse, and rode away.

In eight days and nine nights they reached the city and camped in a grove of mangoes outside. In that city there were no men, there were only women. All the men had gone for the war in Bara Bathi Bengala. The Raja Tapsiriya demanded from Bara Bathi Bengala, that it should be broken up, that the golden pig should be captured, that the head of the Raja Rai Munda should be brought and his twelve wives captured. The first year the soldiers went for the war they sowed mango and tamarind trees, and now these had come to flower and fruit. They always had to get food from their own kingdom, brought by sixty pairs of bullocks in charge of Binjhar. When these Binjhar saw Hirakhan Kshattri they were terrified. Hirakhan sent a message to his father-in-law that he was coming to help him.

When father-in-law and son-in-law met, the Raja told the boy of all that had happened and promised him his youngest daughter Hironda if he would help him to win his war. Hirakhan told his horse Giradwal to be ready. Hirakhan flew up into the air. In six months, he killed the golden pig; he got the head of Raja Rai Munda and captured his twelve wives. But the army of Tapsiriya got jealous, and plotted to kill Hirakhan Kshattri.

So one day while Hirakhan was bathing in the lake with his weapons left on the bank, the Binjhar killed him with Jahura-Mahura Arrows. The Mahura Arrow struck his liver, the Jahura Arrow struck his head, and he fell with a great crash.

Leaving the body there by the lake, the army went on its way. Kamal Hirawal was watching the road for her Raja. When she saw the army coming and that he was not with them, she was very anxious. They said he had gone hunting by the way. But she did not believe them and began to weep. She turned herself into a black cow, and tying a wooden bell round her neck went to search for her Raja.

In a certain village lived a grandmother and her grand-daughter. They sat and gossiped. The girl asked the old woman to tell her a story. The old woman took a long breath and fell silent. Then she

told the sad story of Hirakhan Kshattri. As the old woman began the story, Kamal Hirawal removed her cow-bell and listened carefully. She went to the spot where her husband had been killed. She made a pyre of thorns and brushwood and began to burn his body.

Near that lake lived a Rai Gidhni with two young ones. This vulture used to feed her chicks every day with the leg of an elephant. That day the chicks would not eat the leg, saying 'He was killed for no cause.' Then the vulture flew down to the pyre and pulled away the body, and restored life to it.

After that Hirakhan Kshattri took his wife back to his own kingdom and did not go near the borders of Raiyya Sindola.

4

THE HISTORY OF LOHABANDHA RAJA

A Pardhan story from Baihar Tahsil, Balaghat District

In Chhindinagar there lived Raja Karikuar and in Gujhinagar there lived Raja Hirachand and his sister Urmal Karo. Raja Karikuar searched through the whole world for a bride and at last heard of the beauty of Urmal Karo. He mounted his horse and rode to her country, taking with him a bride-price of five hundred rupees. The journey was long and he passed Chuhari Chhappar the marsh, Bursidadar the great tableland, Chatan Patha the rocky hills, Nirabhanjbata the dry and desolate plain, Papipur the sinful city, Pallanandanban the forest of joy, Koelikachhar the treeless land, Banabindraban and so reached the boundary of Gujhinagar in eight days and nine nights, when one and a quarter parts of the day had passed.

From the boundary he saw before him smoke rising from all over the city and had glimpses of the Dakhin Darwai gardens of the Raja. He went on and came to the Sarwarbandha Lake and there he pitched his tents. The Raja's chaprasi came to find out who had come, and without saying anything went back to tell the Raja. The Raja was in his Darbar, surrounded with Lodhi, Kurmi, Baba, Bairagi, Sannyasi. He was sitting on his high throne. The chaprasi saluted the Raja and the Raja blessed them saying, 'May you live for a lakh of years and enjoy yourselves in my city.' After this they

told him that some strange Raja had come and pitched his tents near the lake. 'The tents are red and green and pink and white', they said.

The Raja then sent a message to Karikuar asking him why he had come. 'I have come in peace and not for war. I have heard of your sister's beauty and desire to marry her.' The Raja was pleased and sent the Kotwar to call nine lakhs of people to escort Raja Karikuar into the city.

Now the Kotwar was Marad Langhaganda, who was the son of Nirbhanjaganda, who was the son of Bajganda, who was the son of Ajganda. He carried a drum eight cubits long and a stick nine cubits long. His girdle was made of suma cord and it was nine cubits long. His loin-cloth was five cubits long, of which two-and-a-half cubits hung before and two-and-a-half cubits hung behind. Thus attired he went all over the city proclaiming the Raja's orders.

There were nine lakhs of Gond soldiers and they went out to greet Raja Karikuar. They brought him in and the two Rajas sat together in the Darbar and discussed the marriage. The girl was twelve years old and Raja Karikuar was fourteen. Everyone agreed readily. The next day came the first betrothal ceremony, the Phal-dan. As Karikuar had the five hundred rupees bride-price with him, there was no need to delay the marriage.

There was an earthen pot called Ghurwa which had twelve partitions, and these held a thousand small pots of liquor. The wedding took fifteen days. The colours of the silken booth were red, pink, white, grey and purple. Raja Karikuar stayed four days after the marriage. This was the cost of it. Twelve strings of goats. Twelve strings of sheep. Nuts and sweets were given to everyone. There were sweet laddu for hunger and thirst. The chief dish was rice, with pulse of urid and mung. When the party left, sixty Kahar were employed to carry their litters. After greeting everyone, Raja Karikuar and his bride got in a litter and were carried home in eight days and nine nights. When they got home, they had the perambulation ceremony and all the people were invited.

After two years the Rani conceived; four and five and nine months were completed and she got a son. For two-and-a-half hours before the birth there was a shower of iron from the sky and so they called the child Lohabandha. After six days there was the Chhatti

ceremony, and after twelve the Barhi when the mother is allowed to go again into the house.

At the same time in the kingdom of Raja Hirachand, a girl was born whose name was Hiro. After the third year the Rani, Lohabandha's mother, remembered her brother's promise to give his daughter to her son, and she asked her husband to discuss this in his Darbar. The courtiers agreed and the Rani was pleased. Nine lakhs of Gond soldiers were sent to ask for the girl; it was to be a marriage in the cradle. The Raja wanted to ask first, but the Rani said, 'There is nothing to ask, he has already promised. Let us go and fetch her.'

The Rani got ready to go. She put on her ornaments. Her clothes were of gold, a skirt from the south, a jacket from the east, her anklets were of Rai Ratan, her bangles were of Indraajot, her toe-rings came from Rai Bhajan. The bun of her hair was worth a lakh and a quarter of rupees, her necklace was worth nine lakhs.

The Raja remembered all the gods and took with him his spear as tall as twelve men with hands extended. On the point of the spear were the twelve tips of the noses of the twelve Rajas he had conquered. The spear was broad as a winnowing-fan, and its hilt as wide as a pot round which one must extend both one's arms. The Raja's shawl was worth a lakh and a quarter of rupees. His coat was worth nine lakhs. His turban was worth thirty-two lakhs. He had a necklace of elephant pearls.

When they had eaten, the Raja and Rani got into their litters. Sixty Kahar carried the Rani, but the Raja walked. Sixty pairs of Gond soldiers were left to guard the Palace. They walked by night and ran by day. When the party reached Gujhinagar, Raja Hirachand was angry that they had come without informing him. 'How did he hear about the birth of my daughter?' His anger reached from his heels to his head when the Kotwar said, 'Let them be married in their cradles.' When the messengers came from Raja Karikuar he rushed at them to kill them, and they ran for their lives. When the messengers returned to Raja Karikuar, he too was very angry, and said to his wife, 'See how your brother insults us.' He was so angry that he could not even smoke his pipe.

But the people of Gujhinagar went to the Raja and begged him to be calm. 'Your own sister has come to you after a long time, and

we must escort her into the city.' At last he cooled down and consented to receive his brother-in-law and sister. Karikuar was now in difficulty. 'How can I go back without a wife for my son? People will laugh at me.' He offered his brother-in-law liquor in the name of the girl, but Hirachand refused. 'Very well: do not take it in your daughter's name, but you must take it for our relationship and because we have met after such a long time.' When they were drunk, Hirachand said, 'If I don't give you my daughter, to whom should I give her? If you will let me throw my spear at you, I will give her to your son.' Everyone thought they were joking. The two Rajas came out and stood before each other. Karikuar stood on one leg with his hands folded. Hirachand lifted his spear—they were all laughing—they meant no ill to each other. But the spear was hungry for blood, it had had no food for twelve years, and it rushed out of Hirachand's hand and pierced Karikuar's chest and came out at the back five cubits long. The Raja fell down, but his life would not leave him. When Urmal Karo heard it, she came untying her hair and weeping. They tried to pull out the spear, but nothing would move it. Only Raja Hirachand could move it. He said, 'O sister, I will marry my daughter to your son and will give you five villages.'

Then Raja Hirachand removed the spear and Raja Karikuar died. He was buried in the mango grove and a great tomb was made over his body. Raja Hirachand took his sister and her son back to his Palace, and gave her a place to stay. He performed the funeral ceremonies of his samdhi. The cradle marriage was celebrated, and the Raja said, 'Come after some years and take away my child. To-day she is only a baby.' Urmal Karo went back with her son.

In ten years the Prince learnt all the wisdom of the world, and in his eleventh year he became Raja. He had the signs of kingship—on his feet the lotus, on his shoulders the royal power, on his forehead the sign of the moon. As they made him Raja, the earth quaked, and the elephants swayed their heads to and fro.

When Hirachand's daughter was thirteen years old, he sent a message that Lohabandha should take her to his house. But there was no reply. Ten times he wrote, but Raja Lohabandha took no notice. Now Hiro was beauty itself, its very form and shape. She lived alone in her Palace with sixty pairs of friends to keep her company. One was called Durga Dai; she used to swing Hiro in

her swing. Another was Bodrahin; she had a navel-stump twenty-four cubits long with a metal cap at the end. She used to wrap it seven times round her waist and on the tip she would tie a phundra, and decorate it with vermilion.

One day Hiro was sitting in her room. She looked out and saw many old men and women going along by the side of the lake. She called Bodrahin and asked, 'Where are those people going?' 'They are going to Hardinagar bazaar.' 'How far away is it?' 'It is a journey of a day-and-a-half.' 'I too will go there,' said Hiro. 'No, you must not think of it.' 'Why not?' 'Because the Raja of that place is very wicked.' 'What is his name?' 'Ramdarwai.' 'Why is he so wicked?' 'Because if any young girl goes near, he seizes her and keeps her in his Palace. For that reason no young girl has been to that bazaar for twelve years. He has twenty wives, sixteen Churelin, and of girls whom he has kept there is no count. When there was no room in his cow-shed, he tied them together in strings.'

But Hiro said, 'Let me see how he ties me up.' In spite of everything Bodrahin could do, Hiro went to Hardinagar. As they went they passed through a town called Daggutola, where sixty pairs of boys were grazing cattle. One of the boys who was very bold sat in the middle of the road. Hiro asked him, 'Boy, tell me how I look.' He said, 'From behind, you look like the mother of two sons. But when I see you in front I can tell you have only had one son. From the side, however, you look like an old woman.' Hiro began to weep. Bodrahin was very angry with the boy and caught him with her long navel-stump and the boy shouted, 'I'll tell the truth if only you'll let me go.'

So Bodrahin let him go. Then said he: 'From behind you look as if you were someone's wife; but in front you seem to be a virgin with girdle unloosed. From the side you appear to be a little girl. From the other side, you look like a fresh lotus flower from the lake.' Then Hiro was pleased and gave him a gold mohur.

That night they rested in a village, and reached the bazaar next morning. When the people in the bazaar saw Hiro they went round her seven times in order to look at her properly. Even the shopkeepers stopped selling and did not care whether their goods were stolen or not. Everyone fell in love with her. Some distributed their goods so that they might be free to look at her. Now the Raja's pandar was a little boy named Banau, and she was so surrounded by the

crowd that he could not see her. He did his best to push his way through and at last crawled under the legs of the crowd until half dead he reached her side. When he saw her he fainted. When he recovered he ran to the Raja to tell him what a lovely girl had come to the bazaar. 'O Raja, a young girl has come to the bazaar where no girl has come for twelve years. Her heel is more beautiful than your tongue and all your Ranis are like the dust of her feet.' As he was telling the Raja about her, Hiro left the bazaar and started for home. The whole bazaar followed. Hiro was frightened and angry and said to the crowd, 'Why do you follow me about?' Bodrahin winked at her and said, 'Let them do what they want.' Then Hiro said quietly to the young boys, 'Won't you help us in our trouble?' 'Yes,' said the boys, 'if you will give us one of your maid-servants each.' Bodrahin said, 'Certainly you shall have them.'

Now Raja Ramdarwai called nine lakhs of Singhi and his spear long as twelve men with arms extended. He tied Banau to his horse's tail, and went to capture the girl. They reached the bazaar, but the people told him she had left. When Bodrahin saw the Raja coming she told the boys to gather a lot of stones. The Raja caught the hand of Hiro and said to her, 'Come, this is the way to the Palace.' But Bodrahin said, 'Beware. First fight with the boys.' The Raja began to fight. Banau the little pandar hid in the water and covered his head with leaves. From the water he shouted, 'O Raja, you have always got what you wanted, now do your best. This is ordinary work for you.'

The Raja killed all the boys and heaped their bodies together. 'Come with me now,' he said to the girl. But Bodrahin said, 'No, fight with me first.' She unloosed her long navel-stump and as it came out it made a noise *toir toir toir*. When he heard it Banau excreted in the water for fear. The Raja threw his mace at her, but it came back with a swing, and Banau called from the water, 'Today you've got it properly from a woman. He who loses eats cowdung, he who conquers eats salt.'

As they fought, the dust rose knee-deep about them and neither could see the other. Even the stones and stumps turned into dust. After eight days and nine nights Bodrahin sat on the chest of the Raja, and the Raja cried, 'O father and mother, save me. This will make me a laughing-stock before the world.'

Banau got out of the water and released the Raja's Singhi, and they went straight into Bodrahin's navel. Then too the Raja's spear began to do its work, and Bodrahin was defeated. The Raja carried Hiro off to his Palace. She pretended that she had a period of twelve years; she said too that she was a virgin, and knew nothing about men. 'Marry me after twelve years.' He was pleased, and gave her a separate Palace and treated her with all the honour and comfort she was used to.

When Bodrahin recovered, she went back to Gujhinagar and told Hiro's father all that had happened. The Raja was angry with Lohabandha and was not disturbed at what had happened. 'This will teach my rascally son-in-law a lesson', he thought.

But when Raja Lohabandha heard the news, he was filled with anger. His mother said, 'Son, I will get you another bride.' But he would not listen. 'This girl was won with my own father's blood.' He took his army of five lakhs of Gond soldiers and nine lakhs of Singhi and marched on Hardinagar. After eight days and nine nights he reached the place. Before beginning to fight he went to a pond to bathe. As he was without clothes or weapons, Raja Ramdarwai hid behind a tree, and threw his mace and killed Raja Lohabandha. He brought the body back to his city and buried it under a dung-hill.

But when the Singhi rose from their sleep they found their Raja missing and went out to search for him. As the children in Hardinagar were playing, they talked about this strange burial, and so the Singhi came to know where the body of their Raja was. They dug it up and carried it to the river. They bathed it and brought back the Raja's soul. Then he disguised himself and went to a potter's house. This potter's neighbour was a Brahmin who was the Raja's Purohit.

Raja Lohabandha killed the Brahmin and dressed himself in his clothes. Then he went to see the Raja. The Raja began to discuss with his Purohit the arrangements for his marriage with Hiro. Lohabandha took out his sacred books and read them, then said, 'O Raja, as soon as you put on the neck-band of the marriage you will die.' 'Cut this horoscope out of your book; I must marry her.' 'No, that is impossible. But there is one way of escape: let the first person who appears in the morning be made the bridegroom. Then as the neck-band is put on his neck he will die and you can

take his place. This man too can be saved if you give liquor to all the wedding guests.'

Next day Raja Lohabandha dressed up as a woodcutter and came early in the morning to the Palace. The Raja called him, but the woodcutter refused to come. 'They tell me I will die if I do this for you.' But he said he would do it if the Raja promised to give liquor to everyone after the marriage.

The marriage started. There were pots and pots of liquor. The bridegroom gave gallons to each guest. Soon all were drunk, and the head of one man lay by the buttocks of his neighbour. They became naked but did not know it. Raja Lohabandha told his wife Hiro the true story of all that had happened. He took out his dagger and began to cut off the noses of the guests. He cut the Raja's so deep that six of his teeth were seen through the gap. He put the noses in a basket and left them in a cow-shed.

He took Hiro his bride to his tent and told the Singhi and the Gond soldiers to be ready for a fight. Early next morning, while it was still dark, the Ahir went to the cow-shed and bumped against the basket. He put down his hand and found meat. 'Aha', he said, 'they did not invite me to the wedding, and now I get this. Some good friend must have sent it.' And he began to eat *kurum kurum*.

But when the light came and the Ahir saw what he had been eating, he threw the rest away. The people in the Palace also awoke, and their noses began to hurt. Each said to the other, 'Where's your nose?' 'Don't talk about me, where's your own?' Soon they saw their own Raja. They could see his teeth. He did not say a word. They were very angry with him. What sort of marriage was this? But the Raja cried, 'Let us go and fight and take revenge.' But the people said, 'No, we are not going to help you any more to get young girls for your pleasure.'

Raja Lohabandha stayed in his tent for eight days and nine nights waiting to see if any would come out to fight. When no one came, he took Hiro his lovely bride to his own kingdom and lived with her there in happiness to the end of his life.

5

A STORY OF SINGHISURWA

A Pardhan story from Seoni District

In Palinagri there once lived Singhisurwa, the son of Parewa, the son of Arewa the king. In the fort of Chanda there lived Bhogibila Singh Raja who was very wealthy and feared no man. Now one day Singhisurwa went to Chanda to get the king's daughter for marriage with his son. He rode on the great horse, whose name was Hansdhar. When he reached Chanda he camped in the king's flower-garden before the fort. That fort was seven stories high, and all round it there were secret traps so that anyone who tried to get in was caught. Every gate was guarded by twelve soldiers. One morning the king went to the top of the fort and looked down, and there he saw this huge horse like an elephant trampling down his flowers. The king said: 'For twenty-four years I have had no visitor. Now who is this who has come on his little pony to see me? Go, seize him, and bring him a prisoner to me.'

But Singhisurwa was a very clever king. When he slept he always had one eye and one ear open. He pitched his tent and fixed it with twelve golden pegs. The king's servants came to the tent and spoke roughly to him. 'Go and tell your master', he said, 'that I am Singhisurwa, son of Parewa, son of Arewa, kings of Palinagri, and I have come to seek the king's daughter in marriage for my son.' When the Chanda king heard this message he was very angry. 'From generation to generation', he said, 'we have ruled here, and now this man comes and sends such a message.' So he ordered his captains to prepare for war, and they got ready their instruments and coats of mail, their swords and spears. But Singhisurwa had slept eight days and nine nights, and the weariness of his journey had gone from him. Round him he gathered all the spirits of the unseen world. The Earth Mother was there beside him, and Basu-mata on whose head rests the world. There was Agyadanu, the lord of fire, and Baitaldanu, who directs the whirlwind, Alopurbi and Kunkalni, Raktipurbi and Chatiburma, Mata Kotma, Mata Gandani, the black and wicked she-devils Sankani Dankani and Chilkni Chabni, wasps and hornets, the stump of wood that flies through the forest by night, Hatyamatya the whirlwind,

Singitumi that has all the spirits of the night within it. These were his army; he himself lay in a deep sleep.

When this host of spirits and ghosts attacked the army of the Chanda king, they killed half his soldiers. The great horse stood watching the battle; it went to the tent and kicked Singhisurwa awake. 'Why are you sleeping?' it asked. The king got up, put on his armour, leapt on his horse, and away they went through the sky. As an arrow flies through the air, so did that horse. Then the horse came down to the earth in the midst of the king's army, and they killed and killed and killed and killed till only the king was left. So now the two kings began to fight. For eight days and nine nights they fought, and at last it chanced that Singhisurwa, son of Parewa, son of Arewa, kings of Palinagri, fell off his horse into the secret pit where the Chanda king's armoury was. There the king locked him up.

Then the great horse, Hansdhar, grew very angry, and with its hoofs it kicked and kicked and kicked, till it had destroyed all that a horse could destroy, and it galloped back to Palinagri. It went on and on and on, the heat of the sun above, the burning earth below. In the jungle there was a king—Dinga-machi-kowa was his name—and he had three times twenty wives. He had a well surrounded by snares so that no animal or bird could go near to drink his water. There was a tree by the well, on which hung a long sword, and if anyone came near, the sword made a *taon taon taon* noise. The horse was very thirsty and went to the well. At once the sword began to give its warning. The king and his court had been out hunting, but when they found the horse drinking they were very angry and tried to catch it. But it kicked some of them, and bit some of them, and flew up into the air, and at last it reached Palinagri.

Now Singhisurwa's wife, Lingarani, was looking out down the jungle road. When she saw the horse she began to weep. 'Why have you come alone?' she cried. The horse told her the whole story. 'Your king is dead', it said.

The son of Singhisurwa was named Palibirwa. He was five years old. When he saw his mother weeping and the horse alone he asked what had happened. When he heard the story the boy took a bath. Then he offered water to the tulsi, he honoured the five spirits, touched the bosom of Mother Earth with his forehead, settled

all the affairs of the kingdom, said good-bye to his mother, jumped onto the horse and crying: 'I'm going to see what that king has done to my father', he flew up into the air.

There was a blackbird sitting on a tree in the jungle. As they flew by the bird began to talk. The horse stopped and the boy said: 'Why are you troubling us? Shall I kill it?' he asked the horse. 'No, don't kill it,' replied Hansdhar, 'but eat a little tetel and spit the juice into its mouth. That will be the token. Then if anything happens to us on the way we'll know whose fault it was.'

So they did this and went on their way. After a time they came to a pipal tree where Rani Gidhal had her home. This vulture had twelve children, but ten of them had been eaten by a cobra. As Palibirwa came there he saw the cobra coming down the tree. 'What shall I do?' he asked the horse. 'Kill it, kill it,' it said. So he killed it and was about to go away when the two baby vultures said: 'Don't go away so soon: you have saved our lives.' But he said: 'We must go, or your mother will kill us.' 'No', they cried. 'We promise she won't.' And they caught hold of him and the horse, and hid them behind the tree. Then Rani Gidhal came flying slowly through the sky. She had twelve dead animals for her twelve children, five in her beak, five on her back, two in her claws. When she came to the tree she cried. 'I smell man's flesh. How is that?' 'That is nothing', said the children. 'We've been eating man's flesh, and so we smell of it. Come and see.'

When she came down from the tree she saw the great body of the cobra cut into pieces. 'Whoever killed this enemy be blessed', she said. 'It was surely he who killed my children. Who has done this good deed?'

'We won't show you', they answered. 'You'll kill them.' 'I'll eat your flesh first', she replied. So when she had promised that, they brought out the child and the horse. The old queen was very pleased, and patted the horse's head. 'Go with my blessings,' she said. 'If any trouble comes, all you need do is to call on my name and I will help you.'

The boy went on and came to Chanda. There he made his camp. He had a tent with golden pegs, he had a golden mattress on his bed, the nails were of gold with pearl heads, the bedding was of silk. There he went to sleep. The king of Chanda was the lord of thirty-six other kings, twenty-one princes, the wealthy citizens of

two-and-fifty towns; this was his Darbar. He said: 'All this is mine, but now another enemy has come.'

The boy started the war. He got up early in the morning, and let the horse destroy the king's garden. He went to bathe in a beautiful well with a golden slab on which the princesses of Chanda washed their clothes. When the boy had bathed he threw mud into the well. The fish and the tortoises came up and, putting their heads out of the water, looked at him with fear. Then he broke that slab so violently that a bit of it hit the king's elephant and it died. With his left hand the boy threw the rest of the slab and it killed half the king's Darbar. Thus the war began. As they fought, the dry earth became a swamp, the swamp became a river flowing with blood; in every river the fish gasped for breath. In the rivers they made a snake the watchman and a crocodile the headman, and they all tumbled out of the little streams to the Narbada. But though there was trouble for the fish, the beasts of the forest were pleased. They rushed out of their hiding-places to devour the dead bodies. The hyena asked them: 'Where are you all going?' They answered: 'A saviour has come. Our fields are ripe, and we are going to reap them.'

They fought and fought and fought till the whole world was dry and weary. The fish had no water save the sweat of the warriors. But at last the king of Chanda was killed. The boy took his head in his hands and said: 'I will take this back to my own kingdom and put it on a pole so that all the birds can peck at it. I have won everything, save my father.'

The boy caught the queen, seized her by the hair, and cried: 'I am going to beat you on your face till you tell me where my father is.' She said: 'Here I live hidden in this great Palace: how should I know where your father is? I see nothing but these golden swings which are rocked to and fro by yellow, green and red girls, who hold in their hands yellow, green and red parrots in golden cages. These are my friends. What do I know of men?'

That queen had a little daughter, Rani Gaila, six months old. The boy went away and at last he found the armoury, and there his father was hanging between earth and heaven, stuck on to the spears where he had fallen. The boy took the name of Mother Earth and Thakur Deo, and restored his father to life.

The father said to his little son: 'Come, boy, we will go

with this little girl, and make her your wife.' They went away on the horse, flying through the air till they returned home. There they saluted every tribe with its proper greeting, and the boy cried out: 'Here is the head of our enemy; here is my bride; here is my father safe home again.'

But they said: 'You have taken a girl without marrying her properly. You must give a tribal dinner.' So the king gave a dinner that cost twenty-five thousand rupees. And then everyone was happy. The boy-king came to the throne, and the queen was in her golden cradle, rocked to and fro by yellow, green and red girls with parrots in their hands.

6

THE HISTORY OF RAJA PALIBIRWA

A Pardhan story from Baihar Tahsil, Balaghat District

In Palipur Jhanjnagar, there lived Raja Singhisurwa, son of Parewa Shah, son of Dalpat Shah, son of Rewa Shah, son of Lodha Shah, son of Kurum Shah, son of Urum Shah. The Raja of Chanda had taken part of the kingdom of Palipur Jhanjnagar. His name was Bhojballar, son of Babjiballar, son of Bhajiballar, son of Ajiballar. For six generations, the Palipur Rajas fought about the land. Rani Ningalpalo was married to Singhisurwa, and was taken to his house. She had prayed to Narbada that she should be given a son before her marriage-haldi was washed away. Her prayer was granted and she was soon pregnant.

But in the meanwhile, Singhisurwa came to know that part of his kingdom had been taken by his father-in-law and he went out to fight against him. But he was killed in the battle. His mare Basanti came back alone, and thus the Rani knew that her husband was killed. She was pregnant, but she was a widow; that was unlucky, so an adopted son was made Raja. He was married and was given a separate Palace. But this boy was very stupid, and the kingdom fell into chaos, for there was no one to control the people, and being free they were very happy. The people were afraid that the Rani might put Singhisurwa's son on the throne, so they urged the adopted son to kill the Rani and see her liver and eyes, and thus rule for generations. But the boy refused. 'It is her kingdom', he said.

For he was very stupid. But when they continued to press him, at last he agreed.

He told his soldiers to kill the Rani and bring him her liver and eyes.

Now in the village there was a Seth who thought that this murder was an evil act, and he went to the Raja and begged him not to do it. The Raja said, 'If you will bring the liver and eyes of someone else, I will give you ten gold mohurs.' The Seth brought the liver and eyes of a goat, and took the Rani and her child to his own house, saying that she was his sister.

Then Ningalpalo saw in a dream Narbada calling her with supari and coconut and betel, and telling her to dip these things three times in the river. As she did this, the child slipped into the Under World, where lived Budha Nag and Budha Nagin. These blessed the child saying, 'You will not die even if you are killed; you will not be cut even if you are cut; you will not be burnt even if you are burnt; you will not be drowned even if you are drowned.' As he returned to earth, Narbada gave him the same blessing.

Soon after this, the Seth's wife began to be jealous of the Rani, and threatened that if he did not turn them out she would tell everyone what had happened. The Seth was afraid, and gave the Rani and her child twenty gold mohurs and asked them to leave his house.

The Rani went away and lived at Dhulia Tola; there she earned her living as a villager. One day the Raja ordered that all the Dhulia should be taxed. The boy went to the Raja and said that his mother had no money. As the boy was standing there, the Raja said to him, 'Fill my hookah, boy.' The boy did so, and to the Raja's surprise the tobacco was very sweet. The Raja at once employed him as his hookah boy. The former boy who was dismissed grew jealous and one day said to the Raja, 'This young boy flirts with your Rani.' At once the Raja ordered him to be hanged.

But the courtiers said, 'Don't hang him, give him some work that will cause his death.' The Raja had a dangerous sow which ate boys, but when the boy was sent to feed it, it did him no harm. Then the boy was told to groom Basanti the Mare, which had kicked sixty Ghasia to death. But to the boy Basanti submitted. Then the boy was sent to care for Bhaoranand the Elephant, which had killed many mahouts in its madness. The elephant too did the boy no harm.

Then the Raja sent the boy to bring wood in carts from the forest

for the Palace. As he was doing this, one day the Rani saw him and asked her servants why such a beautiful boy was given such a hard task. The boy heard the question and that evening went to Ningalpalo and asked her why indeed he was being treated like this. She told him the story of his birth. He went back to the Rani and told her who he was.

The Rani was frightened, and told the Raja everything. 'If you want to be saved, bring him back and make him Raja.' When she said this, the Raja decided to call Ningalpalo and her son back to rule the kingdom. But Ningalpalo said, 'Unless the Raja killed all the people who tried to murder her, she would not come. If he killed them, she would walk on their bodies to the Palace. The Seth must be made Vazir.'

All this was done and the boy was made Raja with great honour. His name was Palibirwa. After a while he drove the adopted son out to kill crows in his fields, and his wife to clean his sheds of cow-dung.

After twelve years, Palibirwa learnt that his grandfather had taken half his kingdom and he went out to fight against him. On his way he met and killed a giant called Dandamachikkar. Near the giant's house were many traps and snares. The giant used to eat two sambhars a day.

When Palibirwa reached Chanda he camped outside the city. The fifty-two lakhs of the Chanda army surrounded him and he fought for two months. He killed everyone and took the whole kingdom. He captured his grandfather's grand-daughter Ballarbendo and took her home. There Ningalpalo arranged his marriage with this girl. He brought home the heads of those he had killed and decorated his Palace with them.

7

THE HISTORY OF HIRDE SHAH

A Pardhan story from Baihar Tahsil, Balaghat District

Lodha Sardar ruled in Godbanka. His brother was Govind Shah, whose brother was Budhan Shah, who was the son of Dalpat Shah. Budhan Shah ruled in Garha and had three wives, Kargarmoti, Pohpaimoti, and Dammemoti. Aurangzeb had given the kingdom

to Budhan Shah. At that time there was nothing in that land but jungle. Budhan Shah paid Aurangzeb a tax called Tikori—five kuro of wild rice, five kuro of wild figs and sihar fruit, five kuro of charchironji and five seers of honey. Instead of a coconut he gave a bel fruit, instead of supari he gave gotiya fruit. Budhan Shah was a great drunkard.

One day Aurangzeb sent his minister to see Garha. But he was afraid of being insulted by the drunken Raja and he did not go. Then a fakir was sent to spy; this man was an opium-eater. He travelled on a donkey, and went through the town begging. He was given five kuro of diamonds, pearls and gold mohurs. When he reached the gate of the Palace, he found it so big that it could only be opened by twelve buffaloes. The sentry was about to kill the fakir with his sword. But the old man stood with hands folded and said, 'I am but a humble fakir; please report my arrival to the Raja Saheb.' The Raja gave orders that the man was to be treated properly. When they asked where he would have his food, the fakir said, 'In the Raja Saheb's kitchen.'

After three months the fakir wanted to go back to Delhi. The Raja gave him a present as he was going—a carpet, a horse and said, 'Ask what you will.' The fakir said, 'What I want is a thing you will never give, so what is the use of my asking for it.' The Raja said, 'No, do ask for it.' The fakir said, 'If you promise to give it, then spit on the ground.' The Raja did so. 'Now lick it up,' said the fakir. But the Raja refused. 'Then instead give me your pannot, the golden pair of shoes, and the chunnat.' In one pair of shoes was an image of twelve Rajas drinking water, in the other was an image of Aurangzeb. The Darbaris were very angry, but the Raja said he could not now refuse. 'Take them away,' said the Raja. 'They are all in the golden basket.' The fakir put the shoes in his bag and went away. In eight days and nine nights he reached Delhi.

Early next morning, the fakir saluted the Emperor and told him all that he had seen in the kingdom of Budhan Shah. 'Did he give you anything?' asked the Emperor. When the fakir showed the golden shoes, the Emperor became fire itself. 'That Raja has never sent me anything but a little fruit from the jungle.' At once he wrote an order and demanded from Budhan Shah a golden grindstone and Bhaoranand the Elephant, otherwise he would lose his

kingdom. Budhan Shah beat the messengers and said, 'Let him come and conquer me.'

Aurangzeb left Delhi with fifty-two lakhs of soldiers. At this time Hirde Shah was twelve years old. Budhan Shah had put iron plates all round his city, so that Aurangzeb could not pitch his tents. But the Moghul army surrounded the place and Budhan Shah was frightened. He said to his advisers, 'Look, these Pathans have surrounded us, and they want to ruin our Gondi religion. Let my three wives dressed as men escape.' The chief minister became a mahout and took the wives out on an elephant. When the Pathan soldiers saw the elephant they stopped it, but the minister said, 'I am a Sadhu and these three with me are also ascetics. The Raja has given us this elephant as a present.' So they were allowed to pass. It took them three days to make their way through the Moghul camp. On the third day the Pathans suspected something, and stopped them again. The Gond Ranis prayed to the earth, 'O Mother Earth, open and let us in.' At once a great storm came and there was a flood. Thousands of soldiers were killed. The elephant escaped and carried them away to Jhalkand, and the whole party became invisible, and thus the Ranis and their Pardhan reached safety.

When Hirde Shah heard that his mothers were safely beyond reach of the Pathans, he said to his father, 'Now give me permission and I will start killing these Mussalmans.' At first the father refused, but the son kept on begging him and at last he had to give in. Then Hirde Shah climbed onto the roof of the Palace to see the Moghul army. But while he was watching them, Budhan Shah killed himself with his own dagger. When he saw his dead father, Hirde Shah wept aloud and called on his mother's name. The noise of the weeping was so great that even Aurangzeb heard it, and sent his spies to find out the cause.

Aurangzeb attacked the city and took the boy Hirde Shah prisoner. In prison, the boy remembered Madan Pat and Bara Deo, and sent a letter to his uncle Lodha Sardar at Godbanka, telling him to come at once. The letter flew through the air and came to Lodha Sardar's court. He was very angry; he got his weapons and mounted his horse Grudbaj; and set out for the city. He had a load of liquor with him and drank it as he went along. When he approached the city he began to kill the Pathans. He fought all alone. His

horse kicked and killed all it met with its hoofs. Soon piles of heads lay on a headless body and a pile of bodies lay on a bodiless head. Soon there was a river of blood. The Pathans were terrified. But one of them who had a battle-axe three cubits long pretended to be dead, lying above a pile of corpses. As Lodha came near he cut the hind legs of his horse. Lodha Sardar was enraged at this and began to drink the blood of the slain. He dropped his weapons and kicked the Pathans. He killed them all, all save ten or fifteen who hid themselves, but these attacked and defeated him.

Hirde Shah was taken to Delhi in a chariot. When Lodha Sardar saw them running away to Delhi, he called, 'Cut my throat and leave me here.' But they were afraid of him and went their way. At last a Pathan cut off Lodha's head, but it joined up again with his body. This he did three times. Then Lodha begged to be cut from head to foot. Thus Jahura-Mahura flew out of his belly, and he lay dead. Lodha Sardar died of sorrow for his brother and was thrown into the lake. The water turned pitch black and all the living creatures died.

In Delhi, when they heard that Lodha Sardar was dead, they no longer treated Hirde Shah as a prince, for they were no more afraid of him. They gave him a little lampful of water and a lampful of gram every day. Even this he refused to take. For six months the boy lived without food, and the Pathans grew afraid. One day he was told that unless he broke a rock with a lump of ganja he would be killed. But he was able to break it. They tied a stone round his neck and threw him into a well. But he got out and they found him sitting on his stone by the well.

The friends of Aurangzeb's daughter came for water to this well, and told the princess about the beautiful boy they had seen sitting there. The princess had an underground passage made to the well, and came to meet him. She was afraid that the boy, being a Gond, would despise her as a Mussalman. She dressed in Hindu clothes and thus went to meet him. She loved him so much that she was willing to become a Gond and eat pork if only he would take her. She was ready even to eat carrion. But Hirde Shah would not listen. At last, after many days of pleading, he was ready and she prepared to take him to her Palace. She had a pig killed before him, dashing it to the ground. A meal of pork was cooked. Gondi liquor was brought, and they ate and drank together. After a month of secret

love, they were caught by Aurangzeb's son Akbar. He was about to kill them, but she stopped him with a Mussalman oath.

Then they ran away together to Ramnagar. When Aurangzeb heard of it, he again sent his fifty-two lakhs of soldiers. But the princess sent the army back by her Mussalman oath, and saved her Raja's kingdom. When he died he became invisible and immortal.

8

THE GOND KING

*Told by a very old Baiga, Murwa, of Dhubhi village,
Niwas Tahsil, Mandla District*

A Raja lived in Chauragarh. He was a Gond, by name Prem Narayan, of the Marabi Clan, and his wife's name was Ningalpalo. They were very poor. For twelve years they lived on sihar seed and sukla grass. This is what they ate. When the Mussalman Emperor came to Delhi, he called Prem Narayan there. Prem Narayan took some mahua juice and charchironji and went to Delhi. When he got there he was greeted by the Emperor and told him everything. When the time for food came, the Emperor asked him what he ate. Prem Narayan showed him the mahua juice and the char seed. The Emperor was amazed and told Prem Narayan to set up his tent in a place of black rocks and to make the pole of chula wood. Prem Narayan put it up in eight hours. When the Emperor saw how clever he was, he gave him his daughter in marriage. Prem Narayan went back to Chauragarh. When Ningalpalo saw the new wife, she got very angry and prepared to go back to her parents' house. But she had no money. She said to her husband, 'Give me a pot of liquor.'

But Prem Narayan had no money either. He went to the jungle and cut some wood. He went to the village, and sold it. Then he went to the liquor shop. The contractor said, 'You've brought a very small pot.' He filled it, but however much he poured in, it never got full. So they brought twelve big earthen pots and at last they were filled. The next morning Ningalpalo went to her house, taking the pot with her. Her parents lived in Adar-kund, above the clouds. It took her nine days to get there. When she arrived, she found that they had gone out for work. Only her bhaui was

staying in the house. She wouldn't speak to her, and would only let her go and sit in the coudung pit. After a while, her mother and father came; when they saw Ningalpalo they ran to greet her and wept. Then they washed off the coudung and gave her new clothes. She gave the pot to her brother, and he drank a lot of liquor, but nothing could stop the supply in the pot. Ningalpalo stayed eight or ten days there, and then prepared to go home. Her brother gave her a she-buffalo called Chandel for milk and two bullocks called Hirarupa. She took them and in eight days and nine nights came to her home. A godling came with her. It was Sri Bhadavan.

Prem Narayan had tilled his land by the river all the previous year but had got nothing from it. He tried again with the new bullocks, and sowed rice there and there was a fine crop. At that time Ningalpalo gave birth to a child. Its name was Beta Bare Hirde Shah. She put the child on her shoulder and went to weed in the field. They reaped the crop, threshed it and took it home. They had so much rice that the villagers were jealous. Then they all had to pay their taxes.

After a time the Emperor sent a sepoy to see how Prem Narayan was. He reported that the Gond Raja had become rich. So the Emperor thought a little, and sent two sepoys to take a loan of sixteen thousand rupees from him. Prem Narayan refused to give the money but sent his son instead to Delhi. The Emperor was angry and put him in a well and closed its mouth with a great stone. On the stone he used to take his bath. In that well lived a godling called Rai Linga. He turned himself into a rat and made a hole from the well to the room of the Emperor's daughter. He took Hirde Shah there at night. The princess massaged him, and fed him, and made him sleep with her. In the morning she sent him back to the well. One day a godling told the Gond boy to fight against the Emperor. He did so, and took the girl, and they came to Chauragarh. Thence he came to Ramnagar and built a great fort. After it was finished, for two days and a half, silver and gold fell from the sky. Thus Hirde Shah became a great king and kept every kind of wild animal for pleasure.

NOTE I

Magic Horses

In the ancient world the chivalry of the air rode on the flying horse. The horse has always been honoured in India. From Vedic times war-horses were prized and worshipped by Hindus. There was no greater sacrifice than the Asvamedha.¹ In the *Mahabharata* we find the splendid Uchchaisravas, the long-eared, loudly-neighing king of horses. The horse of Manidatta was 'white as the moon, the sound of his neighing as musical as that of a clear cornet or other sweet-sounding instrument. It looked like the waves of the sea of milk surging on high'. Many other famous horses are mentioned by Crooke, who notes that 'it is popularly supposed that the horse originally had wings and that the chestnuts or scars on the legs are the places where the wings originally grew'.² So in the *Rigveda*, the horse Dadhikras is described as having wings (iv.40.2). The chariot of the Maruts is drawn by winged deer (i.85.6), the car of the Asvins by 'limbs of the deer and eagle pinions'.

In the stories of this book there are many magic horses. In Chap. i, 4, the horse Hansraj has been buried for generations. The hero digs it up and the horse takes him on his quest for his lost wife and teaches him what to do. The boy has to bury it for twelve years after which it emerges and carries him away triumphant. In the first story of the present chapter Hira Kalangi's horse is named Dumalsai. It too is an ancestral horse; the hero worships it and it springs into the air so high that they touch the sky. It has the power of becoming invisible when necessary. Singhisurwa's horse (in Story 5) was called Hansdhar. The horse went into the garden of the king of Chanda and trampled on his flowers like an elephant. It flew through the air like an arrow and itself annihilated the army of Chanda. When it was captured it 'kicked and kicked, till it had destroyed all that a horse could destroy'. At last when its master was triumphant, it flew through the air and took him home. Belariya Raja had a mare whose name was Rannopoban which had nine lakhs of wings and nine lakhs of heads, but could make itself small and thin when it was necessary to avoid attention. Hirakhan's horse was Giradwal, but we are not told whether it had magic qualities. In Chap. v, 2, the hero catches one of the seven horses of Bhagavan which come to earth to eat the crops of men. The horse promises to help if it is released and the hero jumps on its back over a Palace and it takes him out of a well in which he is buried alive. In Chap. vi, 1, the Raja's mare, a gift from the gods, takes the hero into its belly, escapes sentence of death and carries him to a place of safety.

¹ Penzer, iv, 14.

² Crooke, ii, 204.

³ A. M. Hocart, 'Flying through the Air', in *The Indian Antiquary*, lii (1923), 80 ff.

The magic horse appears, as we should expect, throughout the oral literature of India. According to a Birhor legend, the winged horse Pankhraj was created even before mankind, and when the first clay figures of men were made it trampled them underfoot because it was afraid that if man came into being he would subject it.¹ A horse with the same name appears in another Birhor tale, 'The Adventures of Two Lovers'. It carries the heroine through the air and kicks a murderer to death.² Stokes has a story of the horse Katar, which talks with its prince and can disguise itself as a donkey³ and Knowles describes the horse Zalgur which weeps and warns its master against a plot.⁴

NOTE 2

Singhisurwa

The mysterious figure of Singhisurwa frequently appears in these tales, sometimes as a king, sometimes as a giant. The Singhi are supernatural helpers who come in swarms to help the Gond kings in their adventures. Singhisurwa may be the leader and ruler of these beings.

I recorded a short tale at Malakot in Bastar about Singhisurwa as a giant.

'This is an affair of old time. There was a village called Sarri. Near by was Palometa hill on which Singhisurwa the giant lived. He had two wings which he used to rest outspread on two neighbouring hills. For fear of this giant all the other giants had run away for twelve twelve twenty-four kos.

'In a country lived the two brothers Randerha. When they heard of the giant they came to him and said, "Why are you sitting here in this jungle? Fight with the other giants". Singhisurwa said, "For fear of me they have all run away for twelve twelve twenty-four kos. And who are you? Be off, or I'll destroy you".

'But they were not afraid and began to fight with Singhisurwa. Randerha cut off one of Singhisurwa's wings with his sword, and it turned into a hill which is called Kachmeta. His brother cut off the other wing and it became a hill called Palometa. When they cut off his head, it became the earth, and his hands and feet became the rivers and streams. On that earth which was Singhisurwa's head we all live and die.'

NOTE 3

The Village Watchman

The Pardhans take endless pleasure in making the village watchman into a buffoon, and at the recital of every story comic

¹ Roy, *The Bihors*, 400. ² Ibid, 457. ³ Stokes, 126. ⁴ Knowles, 353.

relief is introduced by the figure of the Kotwar. The Kotwar is usually a member of the Panka or Ganda weaving caste, and no doubt his association with weaving adds to his ridiculous character. Grierson has an amusing passage on how the weaver, in this case the Mussalman weaver, is regarded as the proverbial fool of Hindu fiction. 'He swims in the moonlight across fields of flowering linseed, thinking the blue colour to be caused by water. He hears his family priest reading the Quran, and bursts into tears to the gratification of the reader. When pressed to tell what part affected him most, he says it was not that, but the wagging beard of the old gentleman so much reminded him of a pet goat which had died. When forming one of a company of twelve he tries to count them, and finding himself missing wants to perform his own funeral obsequies. He finds the rear peg of a plough, and wants to set up farming on the strength of it. He gets into a boat at night, and forgets to pull up the anchor. After rowing till dawn he finds himself where he started, and concludes that the only explanation is that his native village could not bear to lose him, and had followed him. If there are eight weavers and nine hukkas, they fight for the odd one. Once on a time a crow carried off to the roof of the house some bread which a weaver had given his child. Before giving the child any more he took the precaution of removing the ladder. Like the English fool, he always gets unmerited blows. For instance, he once went to see a ram fight and got butted himself, as the saying runs: "He left his loom to see the fun, and for no reason got a bruising." Another story is, that being told by a soothsayer that it was written in his fate that his nose would be cut off with an axe, the weaver was incredulous, and taking up an axe kept flourishing it, saying, "If I do so I cut my leg, and if I do so I cut my hand; but unless I do so my no—", and his nose *was* off. A proverb—Does a weaver know how to cut barley?—refers to a story that a weaver, unable to pay his debt, was set to cut barley by his creditor, who thought to repay himself in this way. But instead of reaping, the stupid fellow kept trying to untwist the tangled barley stems. Other proverbs at his expense are—The weaver went out to cut grass (at sunset), when even the crows were going home; the weaver lost his way in the linseed-field, an allusion to the swimming exploit already recorded. His wife bears an equally bad character, as in the proverb—A wilful weaver's wife will pull her own father's beard."

¹ G. A. Grierson, *Bihar Peasant Life* (Patna, 1926), 69.

THE 'MAGIC ARTICLES' MOTIF

THE 'Magic Articles' motif probably originated in the East and spread thence across the world. But the idea is not particularly remarkable, and the motif must have found much to build on in the countries to which it came. The most famous of these magic articles in the fiction of the world are the inexhaustible purse, the mantle of invisibility and the seven-leagued boots. In Indian tales there are shoes that carry the wearer through the air, staffs that always write the truth, vessels that provide whatever meal is wanted, objects that restore the dead to life, and wallets with magic pockets.

Penzer has suggested that in stories depending on this motif 'we notice two distinct varieties: (1) where the articles are stolen by the hero; (2) where they are stolen *from* the hero. In (1) he nearly always meets two or more people fighting and, without any scruples, proceeds to trick them out of their belongings. In (2) the hero inherits or earns the articles; he is tricked into telling their secrets and then has them stolen, only to recover them by the help of the original donor'.¹

But among the stories which I give in this Chapter only one—'The King of the Sparrows'—conforms to Penzer's formula. 'The Magic Cot' is sold quite legally to the Raja. In 'The Merchant's Sons' we find a mirror which tells the death of an absent relative, a plate which gives food, a skin which flies through the air, and a staff which restores the dead to life. But these are all obtained quite honestly in the bazaar from a curiously benevolent merchant. In the next story also, the flying horse is sold to the Raja, not stolen by him, and in the last the magic branch, which on the threshing-floor transforms chaff into grain, is honestly come by. And indeed in other stories in this book, which occur in other chapters because this motif is only secondary to their main theme, there is no reference to stealing either by or from the hero. In 'The Tale of the Shining Goat' there is a magic wand which protects the hero from evil, a dhoti which restores to life bones which are spread upon it, and which turns into a rope and then into a horse. In 'The Story of Jangralal' the dung of the bull-hero turns into food, or a Palace. In 'The Sparrow's

¹ See Penzer, i, 25 ff.

Eggs' the magician has a wand with which he strikes the ashes of the dead hero and restores him to life. Here too the bull-hero, after death, is used to save his brother. The legs are made into a Palace, the tail into a stick to beat enemies, the eyes into hornets to sting them, the ears into a stone which hears anything that is said throughout the world.

Let us now examine the stories in this Chapter one by one. The tale of 'The Magic Cot' is paralleled among the Birhor and the Santal. A version was given by Stokes,¹ but it is not mentioned by Penzer. This is strange, for it is an excellent story and a good example of the motif under discussion. The Birhor story has less consistency of plot than the Bastar tale, but here too the cot itself tells its price to the Raja who buys it. One leg finds four thieves with gold and silver which they have stolen from the Raja. The Raja kills them all. The second leg finds a man embracing another man's wife and kills them both. The two other legs do not go out at all, and we are relieved.² But how the story would have delighted some Zeal-of-the-Land-Busy of Puritan England! The Santal tale is better. Here the 'overhearing' motif is prominent. The carpenter overhears the four legs talking together and saying that they would save the life of anyone who slept on the cot. He sells it to the Raja for a hundred rupees—the incident of the cot telling its own price is not present. Then again as the Raja lies in bed he too overhears the legs talking. One leg goes out and finds a tiger which had come to eat the Raja; it beats it to death. The second leg finds a leopard and a bear; the third discovers four thieves digging through the wall, and the fourth hears a voice in the sky saying that there will be a snake in the Raja's shoe which will kill him.³

It is curious that although the general idea of these three versions of the tale is the same, none of the details agree. Of the three the Ojha story is the most finished and amusing.

Our second story is a slight and probably incomplete Muria tale of a bear that steals a boy's guitar; after an exchange of songs the boy recovers his instrument and kills the bear with it. 'For that guitar was full of magic.'

The third story 'The Merchant's Sons', which is also from Bastar State, is another slight and undeveloped tale, which in the hands of an expert might easily be developed to five times

¹ Stokes, 204 ff.

² Roy, *The Birhors*, 484 ff.

³ Bompas, 131 ff.

its present length. Four brothers are given sixty rupees each and sent out to seek their fortune. The first buys a magic mirror, the second a magic plate, the third a magic skin, and the fourth a life-restoring staff, an equipment with which almost anyone could face the world.

The fourth tale 'The Clever Carpenters' is about a Raja who buys a flying wooden horse: the 'horse was so made that if you turned a key, it would fly up into the air'. The idea of flying horses, as we have seen in the last Chapter, goes back to classical times in India. But what we have here is rather a flying *machine* shaped like a horse. 'There is reason to think', says Clouston, 'that the Arabian tale of the Enchanted Horse was derived from the Persians, who, in their turn, may have adopted the idea of such a steed from Indian fiction. The story of Malik and Shirin in the Persian *Tales of a Thousand and One Days*, in which a flying-machine plays a leading part, and that of the "The Labourer and the Flying Chair" in Jonathan Scott's *Tales from the Arabic*, are certainly clumsy substitutes for the original Indian fiction, in which an adventurer, in love with a princess, personates the deity Vishnu, and appropriately rides on a wooden effigy of Garuda, guided by a pin and moved by magic—the prototype of the Enchanted Horse of the Arabian tale, and of other self-moving machines of celebrity in oriental and chivalric romance.' Burton, however, believed that the flying horse of *The Arabian Nights* is Pegasus, which is a Greek travesty of an Egyptian myth, which was developed in India. 'If this be so,' continues Clouston, 'we must consider the wooden Garuda as an Indian "development" of the Egyptian myth. It is a popular belief among the Singalese that in the country of the Himalayas, the land of wonders, there are horses and elephants which possess the power of flying through the air.'¹

The horse-machine is not uncommon in Indian folk-tales. In Small's *Tota Kahani*, a youth rides a flying wooden horse in pursuit of his abducted lover.² Swynnerton tells of a prince who has a wooden horse made for him by his friend, a carpenter's son, who flies away, meets a princess, loves her, and after desperate adventures carries her off on his wooden steed.³ Shaik Chillli also has a wooden horse, which a prince persuades his grandfather, who is a carpenter, to make for him.⁴

¹ Clouston, I, 377-379; where all references are given. ² Small, 139.

³ Swynnerton, 9.

⁴ Shaik Chillli, 108.

Story 5 about the Raja's embarrassment which had so tragic a result is given by the Pardhan a characteristically vulgar turn. A similar story has been recorded in north Bihar and from the Santal, but with different details. In the north Bihar tale, the Raja's shame lies in two horns that grow out of his forehead. These he always keeps covered and to preserve his secret kills every barber he employs. At last he finds an idiot barber whom he retains, but so great is the strain of keeping the secret that the man falls ill and is only cured when he whispers it to a jack tree. The barber recovers, the tree dies, but a sarangi fiddle is made from a bit of the wood and given to a dancing-girl. When she dances, the fiddle gives out the Raja's secret.¹

In the Santal story,² the Raja has a child with the ears of an ox and manages to conceal the fact from everyone except his barber whom he vows to secrecy. But the secret has a terrible effect upon the barber. It makes his stomach swell to an enormous size. After a time he meets a Dom who asks why his stomach is so swollen. The barber thoughtlessly blurts out the secret and his stomach at once returns to its usual size. The Dom goes his way, cuts down a tree and makes a drum out of the wood. He comes to the Raja's Palace and there drums and sings, 'The son of the Raja has the ears of an ox'. When the Raja hears this he is very angry but the Dom declares that it was the drum that sang the words and he himself had no idea what they meant. Both these stories end happily. In the first, the Raja has the fiddle and the remainder of the wood destroyed, but does not punish the barber. In the second, he gives the Dom a present and forgives the barber. But our story has a very tragic ending. This is curious because it is not generally considered by the aboriginals that to break wind even in public is a very serious offence. In Mandla it is commonly believed that if a boy laughs when a cow or horse breaks wind he will get itch, but there is no equivalent penalty for laughing when a human being does so. In the Bastar Ghotul breaking wind is punished, but it is considered equally punishable to laugh at the offender more than two or three times.

It is hard to resist a reference to one of the most extraordinary cases of suicide ever recorded. Firth describes the strange tragedy of Pu Sao of Tikopia. 'In a gathering of chiefs

¹ S. C. Mitra in *J.B.O.R.S.*, xvii, 192 ff.

² Bompas, 171.

and other men of rank he broke wind very audibly. Overcome with shame he left them. Some days later he was found dead at the top of a coconut palm. He had committed suicide, not by hanging, a common method, but by impaling himself through the fundament on one of the hard dry spathes, sharply pointed, which are usually to be found there. In a list of original deaths that of Pu Sao should rank exceptionally high.¹

The theme of Story 6 is one familiar to all students of folk-tales. It is a variant of the common European tales wherein the hero wins various magic articles and exchanges them for others, but is able to recover them by means of the things for which he exchanged them. Clouston gives as a typical example of this motif a Bohemian variant of the well-known story in Grimm wherein the hero takes from a giant's castle a table upon which one has merely to strike thrice and say 'A royal meal!' and it is before him. The table he exchanges with an old man for a wonderful bagpipe, which when played upon sends forth any number of armed soldiers. By means of the bagpipe he recovers his table, which he again exchanges with another old man for a sack, which produces any number of strong castles that may be necessary. The bagpipe causes its uhlans to bring back the table once more, after which the hero returns home with his treasures, and marries the king's daughter.²

In India this type of story goes back to the Buddhist tale of 'Sakka's Presents',³ and occurs in several oral tales but with the difference that usually the magic article is stolen from the hero who then obtains a similar article which has the power of punishing the culprit and restoring the stolen property. A Western Indian story recorded by Frere⁴ describes how a jackal gives a poor Brahmin a chattee which provides food enough to feast a hundred men. The Raja seizes it. The jackal then gives another chattee with a stout stick tied to it and a rope inside. This time when the Raja tries to take it, the rope ties him up and the stick beats him.

So too a Bengali tale tells how a Brahmin receives from Durga a magic pot from which come delicious sweets. When this is stolen from him he is given another out of which issue fierce demons who compel the thief to restore what he had stolen.⁵

¹ R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia* (London, 1936), 473.

² Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Birth Stories*.

⁴ Frere, 129 ff.

² Clouston, i, 111.

⁵ Day, 53 ff.

The Hindustani variant recorded by Stokes tells how four fakirs quarrel about the possession of four things bequeathed to them by their spiritual instructor—a bed that transports whoever sits on it wherever he wishes to go; a bag that gives the owner whatever he wants; a stone bowl that provides water; and a stick and rope which beats and ties up a thief. The hero is able to outwit the fakirs and by means of the stick and rope gains possession of the magic bed, bag and bowl.¹

A Santal story has a rather different turn. A grateful jackal gives the hero a cow which produces on request clothes, food or anything else required. On the way home the hero stays with some friends who steal the cow, putting another of the same colour in its place. With the help of the jackal the hero recovers it. It is then stolen by some carters and recovered by the police. But in this case we miss the characteristic power of the object to punish the offender and recover what had been lost.²

I

THE MAGIC COT

An Ojha story from Alor, Bastar State

In Haradpur lived a carpenter who had one son. He loved his son so much that he never taught him anything. When the boy grew up he married and had children. After a few years that carpenter died and his son lived on the money he had left. But gradually this was spent and they became very poor. One day the boy's wife said, 'Since my father-in-law died you have not worked for a single day; now find some work or we will all die.' The youth replied, 'My father never taught me anything, what can I do?' The wife said, 'Then I must earn what I can' and she began to find work among her neighbours.

One day the woman said to her husband, 'Now I have been working for many days, but I am not strong and one day my limbs will carry me no longer. Go and do something so that you will be able to feed your children.' The youth looked at his father's tools; he took some of them and some food and went into the jungle. As he went

¹ See also Stokes, 32.

² Bompas, 83. Cf. also Parker, ii, 101 ff; Sastri, *The Story of Madana Karne Raja*, 130.

along he asked each tree whether he should cut it down or no. Each tree replied, 'What will you do with me when you've cut me down?' He said, 'I don't know what to do.' The tree then said, 'Don't cut me.' So at last as he was going home disappointed he came on a fallen and withered sarai tree. He said to this tree also, 'Brother, I want to cut you.' The sarai tree said, 'Very well, brother, cut away. But first tell me what you will make of me.' The youth said, 'I will make you into a cot.'

So saying the youth began to cut up the tree. First he made the four legs for the cot, and afterwards the frame. Then said the wood, 'Brother, it's time for food; go and cook your food and eat. By the time you return I will be ready.' The youth put down his tools and went to a nearby stream and cooked and ate his food. When he came back, he found the cot was ready. Then said the cot, 'When you go to sell me, don't state any price; I will say how much I cost.'

The youth carried the cot back to his house and showed it to his wife. She was very pleased and cried, 'What a fine cot you've made! How clever you are, and all the time you've been saying you know, nothing.' Then the youth told her what had really happened, and the girl was more pleased than ever. She gave him a fine meal and massaged him and put him to sleep. Then she herself put the cot on her head and took it to the town to sell.

First she took it to the Diwan's house. The Diwan was pleased and asked how much it cost. The woman said, 'It will tell you that itself.' Then said the cot, 'My cost is five measures of rupees.' The Diwan laughed and said, 'How can I give so much?' So the woman took the cot to the Raja.

When the Raja saw the cot he was pleased and asked how much it was. The woman said, 'It will tell you that itself.' Then said the cot, 'My price is five measures of rupees.' The Raja was alarmed at hearing the cot speak, but then he thought he must possess such a thing and he gave the woman the rupees and sent her away.

The Raja had the cot put in his bedroom and was about to lie down and sleep when the cot spoke again, 'O Raja Saheb, it said, 'you mustn't lie down like that. First bathe and worship, then lie down to sleep.' The Raja bathed and worshipped the cot and then lay down to sleep.

Now the Rani was in love with the son of the Diwan. She

waited till she saw the Raja was asleep and then she went secretly to the Diwan's house to meet her lover. But one of the legs of the cot, seeing the Rani go out so secretly, followed her. It stood behind the door and heard the Rani talking to the Diwan's son. 'Many days have passed,' said the Rani, 'and we have met secretly. But we cannot do this always. Tomorrow when the Raja has gone to sleep, come and kill him with your sword and we will run away together.' When the leg heard this it went back to its place, and later the Rani came home and slept.

The next day the leg told the Raja what it had heard. The Raja was frightened, but the leg said, 'Do as I say and all will be well. Make an image of a man with cloth and put it to sleep on the cot. Put out the light and hide with your sword behind the door. When the Diwan's son comes, kill him first and then your Rani.' In the evening, the Raja lay down and pretended to sleep. The Rani went out to fetch her lover. The Raja got up and placed the cloth image of himself on the bed, then waited sword in hand.

When the Diwan's son came, the Raja killed him and after him he killed his Rani and buried them both before dawn.

The next day, the second leg of the cot went to wander in the city. Now in a neighbouring kingdom there was famine, and five hundred or a thousand men had come wild with hunger to loot the city. They said to one another, 'This Raja must give us twenty sacks of rice and five pots of rupees and five pots of gold; otherwise we will destroy his city.' The leg heard what they were saying and returned and told the Raja. The next day, the Raja got ready food and money for the hungry men and when they came he gave them their gifts and they went away happy.

Then the Raja thought, 'One of these legs saved my life, and another has saved my kingdom. I must reward this carpenter.' And he sent his chaprasis to call him. When the chaprasis arrived, the carpenter was very frightened and said, 'I never took the cot to the Palace, it was my wife. Take my wife and leave me here.' So the wife went instead, and the Raja gave her many rupees, and she returned home very pleased.

Then said the two legs who had so far done nothing, 'Give us something to do.' But the Raja went to sleep. So when he was sleeping these two legs flew up into the sky to Uparpur, and caught the daughter of Raja Indra and brought her down to Manjhpur,

the earth. They awoke the Raja and said, 'We have brought you Raja Indra's daughter to wed.' The Raja made preparations for the wedding, and in due time they were married.

Again the Raja called the carpenter's wife and gave her a village free of tax. Then the Raja ruled over his kingdom in great happiness and the carpenter and his family ruled their village.

2

THE BEAR AND THE GUITAR

A Jhoria-Muria story from Kapsi, Bastar State

In a certain village, seven brothers lived together. The youngest was always playing on his kindri guitar. One day, he wandered through the forest playing. He came to a tree heavy with ripe mangoes, and putting his guitar down at the foot of the tree climbed it to pick some fruit.

While he was up the tree, a bear came by. Seeing the guitar, it sniffed at it, then picked it up in its mouth and carried it away. When the boy saw that his guitar was gone, he ran home weeping. Now the boy's name was Maro.

When the brothers came home, they said, 'O Maro, why are you crying?' Maro told them how the bear had carried off his guitar. So the six brothers went after the bear to ask for it back. Under the mango tree they found it and, standing some way off, they sang,

'O bear, our bear,
You have taken Maro's guitar, O bear!
Maro is crying so much, O bear,
That he will die, O bear.'

To this the bear sang his reply.

'O big brother, big brother,
When Maro comes himself
I'll give it back to him, big brother.'

Then the six brothers went away. When they got back home

and told the youngest boy what had happened, he went alone to the mango tree, and sang,

'O bear, my bear,
Give me back my guitar, O bear.'

And the bear replied,

'O Raja, O Raja,
Come here to me and drink some gruel, O Raja.
You may flirt with me and have me,
And then I'll give you back your guitar.'

Hearing this, the boy Maro went to the bear and killed it at once. He caught up his guitar and with it he killed the bear. For that guitar was full of magic.

3

THE MERCHANT'S SONS

A Muria story from Munjmeta, Bastar State

A merchant had four sons. When they grew up, the merchant began to consider how to get them married. One day he set out to find them wives. As he went he came to a certain city. Near the city was a lake, and the merchant halted there and cooked his food. To that lake a daughter of a merchant of the city came with her friends for water. She was carrying a broken pot on her head, but her friends all had good pots. Her friends were saying to her, 'Sister, you are a merchant's daughter and yet you bring a broken pot for water as if you were from a poor man's house.' She answered, 'Sisters, my father is a rich man, and I don't know whether I will marry a rich man's son or a poor man's. Therefore I want to know the meaning of joy and sorrow.'

The merchant heard this talk and was pleased. When the girl had filled her pot and gone home, he quickly ate his food and followed her. There the girl's father made his guest welcome and asked why he had come. The merchant said, 'You have a flower in your garden. I have come to pick and wear it.' The other replied, 'It is true that I have a flower. If I do not give it to my caste-fellow, to whom will I give it? I give it to you.' So

they began to arrange the marriage. When everything was fixed, the merchant returned home.

The merchant called his four sons and asked them, 'My sons, I have found a girl. To whom shall I give her?' The youngest son answered, 'Give her to our eldest brother, and we three will call her bhauji.'

The merchant listened to the boy's wisdom, and married the girl to his eldest son. A few days after the marriage, the merchant thought, 'I have four sons; let me see which of them is the cleverest.' So thinking, he called his sons and gave each of them sixty rupees saying, 'Buy whatever you like with this money.'

The four brothers went off with the money. As they journeyed, they came to a lake. There was a banyan tree there, and the four brothers cooked their supper and agreed to go on separately.

The eldest brother came to a bazaar. There a man was selling mirrors. 'Buy my mirror! Buy my mirror!' he cried. The eldest brother looked at one of them and was very pleased. 'I must have it', he thought. 'But what can it do?' he asked. 'If anyone dies in your house,' said the man, 'you will see it in the mirror.' 'And how much is it?' asked the boy. 'It is sixty rupees.' The boy at once bought the mirror, and returned to the banyan tree.

In like manner the second brother bought a plate which had this power: if a man was hungry and he spread a cloth over it, in a short time a meal of rice and pulse would be ready.

The third brother bought a skin which could fly through the air and take a man home immediately if there was any trouble in his house.

The fourth brother bought a stick which could restore the dead to life.

Presently the four brothers reassembled under the banyan tree, and told each other what they had bought. First, the second brother spread a cloth over his plate, and soon there was a meal ready for them. Then they looked in the mirror and saw that the eldest brother's wife was dead. He wept loudly since he was so far from home. But the third brother said, 'Don't weep, my brother. Let us all sit on my skin and we will be home in a minute.'

They sat on the skin, and it carried them up into the air, and immediately they found themselves at home. They went into the house, and there was the girl lying dead. But now the youngest

boy brought his stick and touched the corpse and at once she became alive.

The merchant came in then and made his sons sit round him and tell him what had happened. When he heard their stories he was very pleased that he had four such clever sons.

4

THE CLEVER CARPENTERS

A Baiga story from Silpuri, Mandla District

Delhi was a great city. There was one quarter of none but kings, one quarter of goldsmiths, one quarter of blacksmiths and one of carpenters. The carpenters made stools, beds and chairs. There were no children in Delhi, but one of the carpenters had two sons.

One day when the carpenter went to cut wood in the jungle, the boys said, 'Take us with you.' He refused. But their mother said secretly, 'Your father is going at dawn. I am making food for him. I'll give it to you and you can take it for him.' But the father got up at midnight and went out of the house by the back way. At cock-crow the boy got up and said to his mother, 'My father's gone.' 'Yes, my son, he's already in the forest.' Then both the boys took the food and followed their father to the forest.

When they got there, they looked for a sandal tree, but they could not find one. They found some water, ate their food, and lay down to sleep. Now the tree under which they slept was a sandal tree although they did not know it. But in a dream the tree spoke to them and told them that it was a sandal tree. Both the boys started up, they looked round and there was no one there. 'Who woke us up?' they cried. They cut down the tree and put it, even to the last twig and leaf, on their shoulders. Very late at night they returned home. Their father had come home before them and had taken his food. When he saw the tree he was very pleased.

After a few days, the father died. The boys said to one another, 'Now what are we to do to fill our stomachs?' The big brother said, 'We must make beds and stools.' In a week, the little brother

had made a bed and the big brother had made a stool. They could be folded up; sometimes they were big, sometimes they were small. One bazaar day—the bazaar was held in the king's quarter—they went to sell their wares. They put their things on their shoulders, and stood silent in the bazaar. The people said, 'What have you got there? Why don't you put them in the bazaar for sale?' 'We've brought a bed and a stool, sir', they said. The king's sepoy heard it and caught hold of them and took them to the king.

The two brothers sat down in front of the king and queen in their house. 'What have you brought me?' cried the king. 'Show me.' So the big brother showed his stool. It was very beautiful, covered with gold, studded with diamonds, fit for a throne. The king saw it and was pleased. Then the little brother showed his bed. It was of gold, all the nails were gold. The king and queen lay down on the bed. 'It is a fine bed', said the king getting up. But the queen remained lying on the bed. Then the king said, 'You sleep with the queen. I want to see how it looks.' The boy was very frightened. 'Don't be afraid,' said the king, 'I'll give you a present.' So the boy lay down beside the queen. The king watched from afar and was very amused. He gave a hundred rupees to the little brother and two hundred to the big brother. They took their money and went away.

When they got home, they said to their mother, 'Don't worry any more. We've got plenty to eat now.' Next day both the boys went to the jungle. They cut a sandal tree and brought it home. One made a wooden horse, the other a wooden elephant. These also could be made big or small. They took them to the king who was very pleased. 'I'll give you your own weight in rupees', he said. Now the horse was so made that if you turned a key, it would fly up into the air. The elephant also could fly. The king gave the brothers a lot of money and sent them away.

At cock-crow the king sat on the horse and flew right round the city. When he got back home, he described his tour to his Diwan and his Mukhtyar.

Another day he flew across the ocean to the great mountains of the west. From there the horse could not get back. There was a royal court, the king was in his judgement hall, the queen was at home in the house. The Delhi king was thirsty and went to the queen and said, 'Give me water.' She said, 'Come inside'. The

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king dismounted, folded up the flying horse, put it in his bag and went inside. When he had drunk some water he lay down and went to sleep. The queen felt a sin in her mind and she went to the Delhi king.

But a barber's wife went by and heard them talking inside. She ran to tell the king. The king called his soldiers and surrounded the house. They went in and dragged the king of Delhi from the house. He explained that he had been sleeping and had done nothing. The soldiers said, 'What is your business here? We are going to kill you.' The king of Delhi said, 'Very well, kill me. But first let me eat and drink.'

All the soldiers were standing round the fence of the house. The king of Delhi unfolded the flying horse and put the queen on it. Then he too jumped on its back and flew up into the air. The soldiers fired their guns and shot arrows at him, but he escaped.

The king went on and on and on. At last they came to a river. They decided to cook their food there, and they came down. The king lifted the queen off the horse, and said, 'I'll go and beg in the village.' He put fire in a bit of cowdung, and put it in the horse's mouth. But when he flew up into the air, the wind fanned the flames and the horse caught fire. It fell to the ground and the king was killed.

The queen was left all alone on the bank of the river.

5

THE RAJA'S SHAME

A Pardhan story from Jhanki, Mandla District

A Raja went to hunt and in the middle of his hunting felt a desire to fart. He had taken his barber with him and thought that if he did it before the barber everybody would hear about it. So he went behind a khamer tree and farted there, telling the tree not to tell anyone what he had done.

When the Raja got home he sent for his carpenter and told him to make two drums, a tabla and a duggi, and a chikkara fiddle. The carpenter went to the forest and by chance cut down that very khamer tree, brought it home and made the drums and the chikkara from the wood. When they were ready the Raja had a dance and

all his friends came to watch. In the middle of the dance, the tabla drum said, 'The Raja farted; the Raja farted.' The duggi drum answered, 'I know, I know.' And the chikkara cried, 'He told me not to tell: he told me not to tell.' Everybody began to laugh and the Raja was so ashamed that he threw off his royal garments, covered himself with ash and left his city as a Sadhu.

The Rani wept much, for she could not understand why her husband had left her. She called the carpenter and asked him what had happened and when she heard, sent the carpenter and the barber to find the Raja and bring him home.

After some days the Raja got tired of being a Sadhu and decided to go back to his own city. On the way he met the carpenter and barber, and they went along together. They reached the city at sunset, but the Raja said, 'I will go to the Palace after it is dark; you go home but don't tell anyone that I am here.' At midnight the Raja went to his house, but the servants thought he was a thief and killed him. They carried his body to the river and threw it in.

In the morning the carpenter and the barber asked where the Raja was and then everybody knew what had happened. The Rani ran to the river and, recognizing her husband's body, threw herself into the river and was drowned.

6

THE KING OF THE SPARROWS

A Khuntia Chokh story from Nunera, Lapha Zamindari

An old man and his wife lived in great poverty in the jungle. The woman used to work very hard, but the man was lazy. She used to get the food, he used to eat it. One day she brought some rice and put it to dry in the courtyard, saying to her husband, 'My old man, watch this rice and see that the birds don't eat it.' He sat watching for a little while and then fell asleep, and while he was sleeping many sparrows flew down and ate the rice. When the old woman came home she was very angry and wept and refused to eat her food. But her husband said, 'Tomorrow I'll set birdlime and catch these birds and sell them in the bazaar.' The following day, when they spread the rice to dry the man put birdlime ready. The sparrows came again but this time they were caught and the

old man killed them all except one who said, 'Don't kill me and I will give you anything you want.' The old woman said, 'We had better save this bird and see if it can do anything for us.' So they asked the bird, 'Who are you?' 'I am the king of the sparrows', said the bird. 'Come to my house tomorrow and I will give you a present.' So they let the bird go and it flew away.

The next morning the old man set out to go to the house of the king of the sparrows. On the way he met a great herd of cattle. 'Whose are these?' he asked and was told they belonged to the king of the sparrows. The old man said to himself, 'I'll get a cow from this bird and then we'll have milk to drink every day.' The cowherd said to him, 'One of the cows is called "Son-barsa Gai"; ask for that one.' When the old man reached the house of the king of the sparrows, he sat down on the verandah. The king came out and received him with great honour. 'Now tell me what I can give you.' 'I only want Son-barsa Gai,' said the old man.

Now the dung of this cow was gold. As it went along, the old man ran after it picking up the golden dung till he could carry no more. On the way he came to his daughter's house and spent the night there. During the night while her father slept, the daughter changed the cows. When the old man went home and told his wife of his good fortune, he found that the cow's dung was not gold after all. The old woman was very angry with him and sent him back to see the king of the sparrows again.

When her husband reached the house, he said: 'O king, you have deceived me, for this cow only gave me ordinary dung. Give me something else.' This time the king of the sparrows gave him a magic pot and spoon, saying, 'Put water into this pot and stir it with the spoon and it will turn into rice, or anything else you want.' The old man was very pleased with this, but again he spent the night at his daughter's house and while he was sleeping she stole the magic pot and spoon and put ordinary ones in their place.

When the old man reached home he called his wife and told her to fill the pot with water. She put it on the fire and stirred the water with the spoon, saying, 'Become pulse and rice' but nothing happened and in a temper she threw the water at her husband.

So for a third time, the old man went to the king of the sparrows

and told him everything that had happened. So now the king gave him a golden rope and a bar of wood such as is used to shut a cow-shed, saying, 'If anyone steals this, the rope will tie him up and the stick will beat him five times.'

On his way home, the old man again stayed in his daughter's house, but this time he did not say what the rope and the wood were for. When he went to sleep, the girl tried to steal them, but she found herself tied up with the rope and beaten by the stick. Her cries aroused her father and she confessed what she had done. The old man took his cow and the magic pot and spoon home to his wife and they lived happily, for there was no need for them ever to work again.

7

THE MAGIC BRANCH

A Gond story from Singhia, Uprora Zamindari

A rich Kavar had a poor farm-labourer who worked in his fields. One day the rich man said, 'It is now time to thresh the rice. Go to the jungle and bring a pole for the threshing-floor.' The labourer went to the jungle and got lost. He wandered about for two or four days and grew weak with hunger. There were three dhanbahar trees growing together, two were straight and one was crooked. The labourer slept in their shade. As he slept the crooked tree said, 'Here is a poor servant who has lost his way. Suppose he cuts you down and takes one of you for the threshing-floor and there is nothing for him but the chaff that is left from the rice, how much profit will he get?'

They answered, 'We will give twice as much as he brings. How much will you give him?' The crooked tree replied, 'I will give him a hundred times as much.' The labourer heard their talk as if in a dream, and when he awoke he cut down the crooked tree and took it home. When his master saw it he was very angry and said, 'I know what you have been up to. You have been enjoying yourself with your friends and while you were away we have finished all the rice. Be off with you, there is no more work here.' 'But I must do some honour to my threshing-pole. Give me a little rice.' The rich man refused. 'Then at least give me one load of chaff.' 'You

can take as much of that as you want,' said the rich man. There were fifty sacks of chaff lying on the threshing-floor. Gradually the labourer removed it to his house and threshed it with three bullocks. From this he got five thousand sacks of rice. He became very rich and worshipped his threshing-pole as a god. He was the first Raja of Korba.

8

THE SPARROW'S EGGS

A Baiga story from Balaghat District

A sparrow made its nest of grass on the top of a stone and laid two eggs there. When she asked the eggs, 'My children, what do you want to eat?' they answered, 'We will eat our mother and father.' At that the bird got frightened and flew away to sit on the branches of a mango tree.

The mango asked the bird what was the matter and the bird told her. The mango said, 'Don't be afraid of being eaten by your eggs. You can always come and hide among my leaves.' So the sparrow went back to her eggs, but when they said again that they wanted to eat her, she flew away to the banks of a stream, drank a little of the water and lay down and died.

Then from one egg a boy was born and from the other a bull. The bull said they must go and find their mother. They went out to search for her. Their road ran past a great lake. There the twenty-one sisters, Phulmoti Kaniya, were bathing. The boy took their clothes and hid them. But when the sisters came naked from the sea, the boy saw that some were cross-eyed, some lame, some mad, some twisted and crippled. They looked at him, and their eyes were so full of poison that he was burnt to ashes.

There was a Baiga dewar there and the bull went to him, and the dewar went and struck the ashes with his stick and the boy came back to life.

The boy went with the bull to the kingdom of a Gond Raja. When the Raja heard the story he called the boy to him, and told him to send the bull to fight with the royal elephants. Then there was a great contest. The bull killed the elephants but the king had a magic spear that flew through the air and this killed the bull.

As he was dying the bull said to the boy, 'Take my eyes, my ears, my tail and my four legs. If you are in danger, bury the legs and a Palace will rise from the ground. The tail will be a stick to kill your enemies. The eyes will turn into hornets, and my ears will become a stone through which you will be able to hear anything that happens anywhere in the world.'

After some time, the Gond Raja decided that he would kill the boy also. But the boy did all that the bull had told him to do, so that when the king's army came to kill him, they found him sitting in his Palace. The bull's tail flew to and fro and killed half the king's army, and the hornets stung the rest and they ran away.

Then the Raja, seeing his army destroyed, went to meet the boy and made friends with him. He gave him his daughter in marriage and handed over to him the control of his kingdom.

NOTE I

The Korba Zamindari

The Korba Zamindari is the largest of the ancestral estates in the Bilaspur District of the Central Provinces. Eight hundred and fifty-six square miles in extent, it covers a varied tract of mountainous country and open level plains. Its Zamindar is a member of the Thawar Kshattri caste. It is said that the founder of the present house conquered a former Gond Chieftain comparatively recently. Even now on the eastern borders the country is as wild as any in the C.P. and according to Sir R. Jenkins' Report of 1826, there was once a cannibal tribe known as Binderwas living there.

THE SKIN-DRESS

THE stories in this Chapter, while varying greatly in plot and incident, all contain at some critical point of their development the incident of the transformation of hero or heroine by the adoption or removal of a skin disguise. Three different types of story may be distinguished. In the first the skin-dress is that of an animal and is worn by the hero probably as a result of enchantment, though this is left somewhat vague. In the second, divine maidens wear a disguise of human skin in order to approach human beings. In the third the skin disguise is assumed by human beings for some special purpose.

The first type of story is illustrated by Nos 1, 2 and 8 of this Chapter, the tale of the monkey boy in *The Baiga*,¹ the Ho tale of the miserable cowherd,² Stokes' story of the prince born with a removable monkey skin,³ and the Santal tale of the caterpillar boy.⁴ In Story 1 an element of humour is introduced by the dilemma in which a girl finds herself on being married to a crab. The hero does not reveal himself to his wife directly, but hides his crab-skin in a tree and wins her heart before she knows who he is. In the second story the girl falls in love with a hero in his crab form. In Story 8 the skin-dress motif is incidental to the main tale but I include it because it is the only one in our collection where we have the significant detail that when the skin is burnt the hero feels all the pain of burning. This also appears in the Ho tale of the miserable cowherd whose wife discovers his secret and burns the skin. As the skin burns the cowherd himself is in agony, but he is cured by the application of oil and thereafter retains permanently his shining form. The Baiga tale is of a boy who goes to live among monkeys; they give him a synthetic skin suited to his new way of life. In this tale at least there is a suggestion of the reason why the hero is found in this strange disguise and in Chapter I, 5, where the skin-dress theme is not developed, a mongoose declares that it is the child of a human mother who was born while she was raking the ashes of a penda plot, which resulted in his being

¹ *The Baiga*, 496.

² Bompas, 474.

³ Stokes, 41.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 227. To the same class of tale belongs Parker's 'The Leveret', iii, 187-8. For further references to Kalmuk and African stories, see Parker, iii, 445.

born with fur dark as the ash. But elsewhere we have no hint to explain why the boys should find themselves in their remarkable predicament.

The Ho story of the caterpillar boy is developed with some realism, for since he has no arms or legs he has to be carried in a special litter to meet his bride. Apparently the caterpillar boy retains his shape in all his relations with his wife and it is only when she is asleep that he assumes his human form. A caterpillar is, I suppose, though one hardly likes to think so, in itself a phallic symbol. Here, as always, the skin is found at last and is destroyed. This Santal tale has been compared with a Lhota Naga tale of a caterpillar boy, but in this the transformation is a direct one from human to insect. There is no reference to the changing of the skin which is an essential part of the motif we are discussing.¹

The second class of tale is represented by Stories 3, 4 and 5 of this collection. In these a daughter of Bhagavan disguises herself in order that she may visit the Middle World and her shining form may not dazzle human beings. In Story 4 the girl desires to come to earth because a crow reports that of all three worlds the greatest happiness is to be found in the Middle World. Story 3 is a weak and incomplete version of the excellent 'Story of the Seven Princes', recorded by Shaik Chilli.² In Story 4, the daughter of Bhagavan cruelly murders an old woman in order to get her skin but manages to win the hero in spite of her ugly appearance. After marriage a dog carries off the skin and she lives as a human being until one day her husband beats her, whereupon she disappears. In Story 5 also the hero after refusing many celebrated beauties marries a daughter of Bhagavan disguised as a filthy beggar girl of the lowest caste. He burns her skin and she is restored to her original loveliness, but he too beats her and she disappears.

The Santal story of the Dog Bride does not actually say that the lovely maiden who goes about the world as a dog is a divine being though it implies it. The hero in this case discovers the secret before marriage for he surprises the dog removing its skin and bathing. He then insists, in spite of all opposition, in marrying the dog. After their marriage he notices that every night his wife removes her skin and goes out of the house. He waits his chance and burns her disguise.

¹ See *J.B.O.R.S.*, xiv, 426.

² Shaik Chilli, 55 ff.

This story introduces a comic element in the person of the hero's friend, Jitu, who seeing what a prize the other has obtained, marries a dog himself to his inevitable mortification.¹ It is rather surprising that this elaboration does not occur more frequently.

There is a Lepcha tale of a beautiful girl, made of gold from head to waist and of silver from waist to feet, who lives clothed in a dog's skin. An orphan boy adopts the dog, though with no idea of marrying it, but after he has taken it to his house he finds that every day during his absence from the house his room is cleaned and food is cooked for him. One day he hides and sees that it is the dog who leaves off her skin and does the household work in her real shape. He seizes hold of the skin and tears it into pieces from which gold and silver flowers spring up. It is only then that the marriage is celebrated.² Here too, although it is not expressly stated, it is obvious that the girl is a divine maiden who has adopted animal form.

It is interesting to note that in all three stories in the text, the divine maiden deserts her husband in the end. In two cases she disappears because he beats her. Macculloch has classed this taboo on beating or irritating a fairy wife among the usual taboos that must be observed when such matrimonial alliances are contracted. Other taboos are not to look at the bride nor to reveal the secret of her origin, nor to take her name nor to touch her with iron.³ Codrington gives a beautifully told Melanesian tale with this motif where the man who marries a fairy woman quarrels with his wife over the garden and beats her saying, 'You don't belong here down below, you belong above the sky, get back into your own country'. When he goes away she makes a fire and as the smoke goes straight up into the clouds she goes up in it while her child cries beside the fire. In this case the husband persuades a spider to spin a line from earth to heaven and take him and his child up to find the woman who, when she recognizes them, agrees to return.⁴

In the third class of tale a girl or youth adopts a deliberate disguise, as in Miss Frere's story of 'The Raksha's Palace'. In this a princess, feeling the need of concealing her beauty

¹ Bompas, 254.

² J.A.S. Beng. (New Series), xxi, 380. With this compare J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament* (London, 1918), i, 268, 278.

³ Macculloch, 333 ff.

⁴ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), 383.

for fear someone should abduct her, removes a skin from the corpse of an old beggar woman on the roadside and draws it 'over her own lovely face and neck as one draws a glove, on one's hand'. She goes to bathe and the prince sees her and insists on marrying her although she appears a hideous old woman. In the end he burns the skin and lives happily.¹ Our stories are less highly moralized. In Story 4, the daughter of Bhagavan cruelly murders one old woman and in Story 6, a girl fleeing from marrying a Raksa beats another to death and disguises herself in the skin. A prince watches her go to bed after removing the skin, falls in love with her and marries her. In Story 7, a prince disguises himself as an ugly beggar boy by borrowing the skin of a char tree and in this form wins the Raja's daughter and at last the kingdom.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that these stories have some reference to the achievement of immortality as a result of a change of skin, a belief which is widely held throughout the world. Briffault has given many examples from Australia, Melanesia, Africa and America,² though curiously enough he has not one from India. The idea probably arose from the fact that in most primitive thought the serpent, which is the emblem of immortality, has the power of changing its skin. Old age causes wrinkling of the skin and it is said that some of the people of British Columbia believe that men die because their skin is too thin. If then men could change their skins they would be immortal. In our stories there appears the idea that if the immortals can change their skins they will become men.

It will be remembered that, according to Biblical tradition, it is the serpent that cheats the human race of the gift of immortality and a Rabbinical commentary quoted by Briffault explains that Adam, 'after the Fall, did not possess the same skin as he had before, his first skin having presumably been immortal; it is in consequence of thus having changed the skin of the first man that the serpent is compelled to moult his'. An early Muslim doctor, drawing, no doubt, from the same traditional sources, gives further particulars. 'When the fruit had descended down Adam's throat and reached his stomach', says the commentator, 'the skin which Adam had in Paradise fell from his body. That of Eve fell off likewise, and the soft flesh of their bodies remained exposed as it is

¹ Frere, 125.

² Briffault, ii, 641 ff.

with us at the present day; for the skin which Adam had in Paradise was similar to the substance of nails. When it became detached, only a small portion of it remained on the tips of the fingers; and thereafter, whenever Adam or Eve beheld the nails of their fingers, they were reminded of Paradise and its delights.¹

A writer in *Man* on 'The Skin of Re-birth' stresses the connexion with re-birth rather than immortality and supplies the references lacking in Briffault.² He notes the African attribution to skins of 'a life-giving and magical significance' and proceeds to find in India the same meaning given to them. When a young Brahmin is invested with the sacred thread, he is given the skin of an antelope or a piece of one. This is threaded on a string and hung round his neck. At a Brahmin wedding the young couple should sit on the hide of a red bull. Again when a worshipper prepares for his devotions by sitting on a low stool, the stool should be covered by the skin of an antelope.³ That a skin signifies re-birth is made clear by the rite of initiation into a new rank or status, for instance, that of a king or god. In the coronation ritual, the *Satapatha Brahmana* tells us that the officiating priest invests the king with a garment known as 'the inner caul of sovereignty'. Afterwards he invests him with 'the outer caul of sovereignty'. Finally he throws over him a mantle which he addresses as 'the womb of sovereignty'.⁴

In much the same way, in ancient India a Brahmin was raised to the rank of a god. 'He feigned to be an embryo and as such was shut up in a special hut representing the womb. Under his robe he wore a belt, and over it the skin of a black antelope; the belt stood for the navel string, and the robe and the black antelope skin typified the inner and outer membranes (the amnion and chorion) in which an embryo is wrapped.'⁵

It may be that the sacredness ascribed to black is due to its recalling the black shiny stuff of the outer membrane of the embryo.⁶

¹ Briffault, ii, 650.

² Maurice Canney, 'The Skin of Re-Birth', *Man*, xxxix (1939), 105-6.

³ See Sinclair Stevenson, *The Rites of the Twice-born* (London, 1920), 33, 40-93, 104, 215.

⁴ A. M. Hocart, *Kingship* (London, 1927), 77.

⁵ Fraser, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, ii, 32.

⁶ Canney, op. cit., 106.

I

THE FISHER-GIRL AND THE CRAB

A Kuruk story from Chitrakot, Bastar State

An old Kuruk and his wife had no children. The old man sowed rice in his field and, when after some days the rice had sprouted, he took his wife to the field to see it. On one side of the field was a gourd, and they took it home for food. But when the old man was about to cut it up, the gourd said, 'Cut me gently, gently, grandfather!' The old man was so frightened that he dropped it. He ran to his wife and said, 'This is a talking gourd'. 'Nonsense', said the old woman and took the knife herself. But the gourd said, 'Cut me, gently, gently, old mother!'

So the old woman cut the gourd up carefully and slowly, and from inside there came out a crab. They got a new pot and put the crab inside. The woman tied a basket to her belly and covered it with cloth. Then she went to the bazaar and told the neighbours, 'Look, in my old age Mahapurub has given me a son.'

After some time, she removed the basket and took the crab out of the pot and told everyone, 'Look, I have given birth to this crab.'

When the crab was grown up, they went to find him a wife. They got him a nice girl, but when she came to the house she was angry at finding herself married to such a creature. Every night she waited for him, but what could a crab do? Then the girl thought, 'I must find another man.' Whenever the crab spoke to the girl, she used to kick it away.

One day, the girl wanted to go to visit a man in another village. She let her parents-in-law and the crab go to sleep, and then crept out of the house. But the crab saw her go and he got out by another way and went ahead of her along the road. By the roadside there was a banyan tree; to this the crab said, 'Are you my tree, or whose tree are you?' The tree said, 'I am yours.' Then said the crab, 'Fall down.' The tree fell down. Now inside that tree there lived the shape of a youth. The crab took this on itself, and put its crab-shape into the tree instead. It went along the road a little and then told the tree to stand up again.

After a time, along came the girl. When she saw the beautiful youth under the tree, she was very pleased, and said, 'Where are

you going?' He said, 'Nowhere, I am going home.' She said, 'Come and lie with me.' He said, 'No, I'm afraid. Your husband will beat me. But I'll come another day.'

Disappointed, the girl went on. She met a Chamar girl and two pretty Mahara girls. They too were looking for men. The Kuruk girl told them her story, and they took her with them to a dance, promising her a fine gallant. When they got there, they found that the crab-youth was there already. When they saw him, each girl longed to have him as a lover. He went to the Kuruk girl and she drew him aside. But he did nothing. She gave him her ornaments, and he went away.

When he reached the tree, he bade it fall down, and took his own crab-shape again, returning the shape of the youth to the tree. 'Stand up again', he told the tree, and went home. After a little while the girl also came home. The crab asked her where she had been, but she was in a temper and kicked him out of bed. Then the crab gave her back her ornaments. The girl was frightened and declared that they were not hers.

The next day, the girl again gave everyone food and put them to sleep. This time she hid by the roadside, and watched to see what the crab would do. The crab came to the banyan tree and said, 'Are you my tree, or whose are you?' The tree said, 'I am your tree.' Then the crab said, 'If you are mine, then fall down.' The tree fell down, and the crab took the shape of the handsome youth, and let the tree stand up again.

The girl was watching all that happened. When the boy had gone on his way, she went to the tree and said, 'Are you my tree or whose are you?' The tree said, 'I am yours.' She said, 'If you are mine, then fall down.' The tree fell down, and the girl pulled out the crab-shape and killed it and threw it on a fire. Then she hid behind the tree and waited.

The youth went to the dance, but he could not find his girl, so he came back to the tree. The girl jumped out from behind the tree and caught him and took him home. After that they lived happily together.

2

THE CRAB-PRINCE

A Muria story from Markabera, Bastar State

An old Muria and his wife lived on the bank of a river. They cut the forest and sowed rice in the clearing. But when the shoots of the rice appeared, the crab Kakramal Kuar used to come every day out of the river and eat them up. In despair the old man asked his wife what he had better do. She told him to make a jitka trap. When he had made it, he set it in the field where the water ran out down into the river. One day he found the crab caught in the trap. When he raised his axe to kill it the crab said, 'O father, do not kill me but let me live in your house.' The old man took up the trap with the crab, slung it on his axe over his shoulder and went home. His wife was husking rice, but when he called her out to see what he had caught and she saw the crab she lifted up the rice-husker to kill it. But the crab said, 'Don't kill me, mother, let me live in your house.' So the old woman let the crab live in a corner of the verandah.

Eight days later, the Raja called the villagers in begar to reap his crops. The old woman said, 'All the young men and women of the village are going to work, but whom can we send from our house?' The crab said, 'I will go for you, old mother.' 'How can you go, boy? They will tread on you and kill you.' But the crab took no notice. It tied a sickle to its claw and went out to the fields. When the villagers saw it they shouted, 'Get out of here, or we'll kill you. Why don't you go to the field of the Raja's daughter?' The crab went to the Raja's daughter's field and there its back came off and it turned into a beautiful twelve-year-old boy. He worked very hard and reaped a great deal of the field.

At midday it was time for food and the wives and mothers came with gruel for those who had been working. The Raja's daughter also came with a big pot of gruel on her head to give to the men who had been working on begar for her. They told her laughing, 'There is a crab working in your field. You ought to give it something to eat also.' The girl went to her field but when the boy saw her he got into his crab-skin again and went along on ten legs. The girl sat down and tried to feed it. She put the gruel into the hole where she thought its mouth was, but it fell out on to the ground.

Then she put bits of rice between its claws and it was able to eat that. When it had finished the girl went away.

When the work was done the Raja called the labourers for a feast of pork and liquor. The crab went with the old Muria and his wife and sat on the edge of the crowd; they gave it a little pork, putting the bits between its claws and let it have a leaf-cup of liquor. The crab got very drunk, so the old woman tied it in her sari and took it home.

After some days the Raja's daughter began to sulk. She refused to eat anything and sat in a corner with her face to the wall. Her father came to see what was the matter and she said, 'Why don't you marry me? I am tired of living like a fool in your Palace.' The Raja called the wealthiest and most handsome princes from all over the world. They came from Mandla and from Kanker and from the Oriya country, but she was not satisfied with any of them. At last she called the people of her own village. The crab came with the rest and sat by itself. The girl went round with a garland in her hand, but she refused every one else and put it on the crab. 'Though they laughed at her, she took no notice and did the same thing three times. The Raja said, 'Do not laugh at her, this is our fate; it may be a crab but it is my true son-in-law.' He arranged the marriage and his daughter and the crab were wedded. When the ceremonies were over, the crab wandered away proud and happy and its wife followed it.

But at midnight the crab left its skin and turned into a handsome youth. Not far from their house were the Raja's stables. The boy went there and rode the horses round and round the village till they were worn out. One day the Raja went to see what was the matter. The syce said, 'I give them the best food, yet they always grow thin.' That night the Raja hid himself behind the wall and watched. He saw the boy get out of his crab-skin and ride round the village on the horses. The Raja called his daughter and told her to burn the skin of the crab the following night. The next evening the girl pretended to be very tired and when the boy left her she burnt the skin. When he came home and could not find his skin he felt very shy, for he was naked and he covered himself with a blanket from head to foot and slept. When day came he refused to get up, for he was ashamed to be seen by his wife without his skin. But she pulled the blanket off him and gave

him royal clothes to wear and when the Raja saw that his son-in-law was really a prince he gave him half the kingdom.

3

THE MONKEY-WIFE

A Dhoba story from Saraipani, Mandla District

A Gond Raja had seven sons. He gave them bows and arrows and they fired their arrows up into the sky. Six of the arrows fell into Palaces where there were living unmarried daughters of great Rajas. But the seventh hit a tree by a lake. Each of the Rajas whose Palace had been hit by the arrows agreed to marry his daughter to the Gond boys. But when the seventh son went to find his arrow in the tree, all he found was a monkey, and he had to marry her.

The Raja gave each of his sons a separate house to live in. One day he asked them for presents of cloth. The six boys who had married the royal daughters gave beautiful presents, but the seventh boy was very poor and had nothing to give. But his monkey-wife said, 'I will go and get you cloth to give your father.' She went to the tree by the lake and her six sisters came down from the sky in a chariot. The monkey turned into a girl and got into the chariot and they flew up to Bhagavan's Palace. There they danced so well that he gave them his own clothes as a reward. The monkey-girl brought them back wrapped up in an old cloth. When the boy saw it he felt very sorry, but his wife insisted that he should call the Raja to their house. When the Raja came he laughed when he saw what he thought was a bundle of dirty old clothes. But the monkey-girl opened it and there was a blaze of light and the Raja saw the wonderful garments of Bhagavan himself.

The following year the Raja asked his sons to give him a feast. The six elder boys gave him a great feast, but the youngest brother had nothing to offer but the dirt and stones which were left after the rice had been cleaned. Once again the monkey-girl went to Bhagavan and brought enough food for all the people of the city. Then Bhagavan gave the boy two flutes, one for sorrow and one for joy. During the day the boy played the flute of sorrow and his

wife remained a monkey, but at night he played the flute of joy and she turned into a beautiful girl. Seeing this, her sisters became jealous and one day they stole the flutes and carried away the monkey-girl into the sky.

4

THE DAUGHTER OF MAHAPURUB

A Muria story from Kabonga, Bastar State

There was a merchant who had one son, whose fate it was that on the day he was married he should die. Therefore his parents refused to marry him, for they said, 'If he dies, who will eat our wealth after we too are dead?'

In the Upper World was Mahapurub. He said to the crow, 'Go crow and see the three Worlds and tell me where the greatest happiness may be found.' The crow flew about the Upper World and then came to the Middle World. When it had seen the Middle World it went to the Lower World. Having seen all these things the crow returned to Mahapurub, who asked it, 'Where is the greatest happiness?' The crow replied, 'In the Middle World.'

Now Mahapurub had seven daughters, and when the youngest heard that the greatest happiness was to be found in the Middle World, she lay down in a corner of the house; she ate nothing, and refused to speak. At last Mahapurub asked her, 'O daughter, why are you angry? Tell me what you want and I will give it to you.' She said, 'I want to go to the Middle World.' Mahapurub said, 'When you go there what will you eat? The people there all eat grain.' The girl said, 'I too will eat grain.' 'Very well', said Mahapurub and he called for the spider and bade him spin two threads to join the Upper and the Middle Worlds. When this road was ready, Mahapurub's daughter went down the threads to the Middle World.

Now the daughter of Mahapurub was shining as the sun, and she wondered how she was to go to anyone's house in such a state. There was an old woman gleaned on a threshing-floor among the chaff of hirwa-pulse, and the girl went to her and said to the old woman, 'You won't get anything that way. Get down under the chaff and I'll beat it above you, and then you'll get all

you want.' The old woman lay down and the girl piled the chaff over her, then she took a stick and beat her till she died. The girl removed the old woman's skin and put it on herself. Now she was no more bright and shining but looked like an old woman, and she went along the road begging, covered with a swarm of flies.

After a time she reached a Seth's house, and the Seth's wife came out to drive her away. The Seth's son also came out and said to his mother, 'No, give her something to eat.' 'But she stinks, my son,' cried the mother, 'and will make us all ill.' The boy, however, brought out a dish of rice and pulse, and gave the girl a place to live in outside the house.

After some days the boy said, 'I have not yet found anyone to marry: I will marry this old woman.' But his parents said, 'That will be a matter of shame for us. We will find you a beautiful young girl.' But the boy took no notice of them and insisted that he should marry the old woman. At the wedding, the guests spent their time laughing at the bride—'See the flies on her wrinkled skin! How the old body stinks! How will he bring himself to embrace that rotten flesh?' and so on.

But just as the marriage ceremony was beginning, the girl went to the river and bathed, she removed the ugly skin and came back to the house. There she put the skin down on the floor and stood behind the door combing her hair. A dog came by and carried off the old skin, and now the girl could not go out, so she hid inside the house. Now it was time to bathe the bride, but everyone feared to touch her. At last someone went to bring her, and found the room where the girl was hiding full of light as if the sun was there. The Seth came running to see what had happened and fell senseless. When he came to himself, he cried, 'My son will not be married now: I must call people from far and wide, and spend much money on the feast.'

After some days, the marriage was celebrated with great feasting and expense. After this, the Seth used to consult his daughter-in-law about everything he had to do. One day he asked her how he should sow the seeds in his field. The girl said, 'Collect as many ploughs as you can.' He collected twelve-score ploughs, and asked the girl where he should get the food for all the workmen. But the girl brought gruel in the eggshells of peahens and rice in the eggshells of hens and chutney in the eggshells of the woodpecker

and water in the eggshells of the wood-pigeon. But when the boy saw this, he was very angry and picked up a stick and beat the girl. As he beat her she disappeared. And when the ploughmen came to eat their food there was so much in the little shells that they could not finish it.

5

THE STRANGE WIFE

A Muria story from Kachora, Bastar State

There was a Muria Raja who had one son whom he loved greatly. When the boy was old enough his parents said, 'Now we must marry our boy.' They went to the house of a Muria merchant to find him a wife. 'Why have you come to me?' said the merchant. 'We hear a flower has blossomed in your house and we would put it in our hair.' The merchant replied, 'O Maharaja, if I don't give my flower to you, to whom should I give it?' and thus the engagement was arranged. But when he came home his son said, 'Where did you go to get my wife? Why didn't you ask me first? I must come and see her,' and he went off to the merchant's house to see what the girl was like.

When he came there he said, 'Father-in-law, let me see your daughter.' They called her out but he spat on the ground and cried, 'I will never marry a girl like that.' They were angry and said, 'Well, if you don't marry the daughter of a rich man, you will never marry anyone.' At last they went to a peasant in one of their villages where a beautiful girl was living, but the boy again spat on the ground and refused to marry her. Thirdly, they went to a Raja's house and he too promised to give them a flower that had blossomed in his garden. Once again the boy said that he must see his wife before he married her. But when he came to the Raja's Palace the Raja said, 'My daughter cannot come out to see you: you go in and see her. She is sitting in the garden on a swing.' But the boy said, 'Go and call her out, how can I go inside?' So they called her out from the shelter of leaves which they had built for her to sit in and everyone there was amazed at her beauty, but when the boy saw her he spat on the ground and went away.

The Raja was very angry and the boy's parents also said, 'We can do no more. Now go and marry whom you will.' There was a Chamar girl in the village who sat covered with sores in a dirty place. Where she sat worms and lice fell to the ground. She used to go begging but everyone drove her away. One day she came to the boy's house. When the boy saw her he took her to his room and fed her and kept her with him saying, 'This is the girl I am going to marry.'

His parents felt so angry and ashamed that they could not look at him. They arranged the marriage behind the Palace where no one would watch. After the wedding the Raja gave his son a separate house, but even the servants and the sweeper could not enter it, for the girl's body stank so horribly. Yet at night she used to remove her filthy skin and go out to bathe in the river while her husband slept.

One day the boy went to visit an old woman and wept bitterly. 'Now I am married according to my desire, yet no one will come to clean the house or cook for me; what shall I do?' That old woman was very wise and she said, 'Don't be afraid, this girl is Bhagavan's daughter and every night she takes off her filthy skin and goes to bathe. Watch her and one night when she is away burn the skin.' That night the boy kept awake and after she had gone out to bathe he followed her and saw all that she did. The next night he sent for twelve cartloads of wood and made a great pile before the house. At night while his wife was bathing he put the skin on the fire and destroyed it.

When the girl came home she could not find her skin and the whole house was alight with the shining of her body. She lay down to sleep and when her husband saw her he fainted. The next morning twelve servants came with water pots from the Palace, but when they saw the girl they fell fainting to the ground. Some broke the pots, some broke their arms and legs, but all ran away. When they told the Rani of her daughter-in-law's beauty she too fainted and the Raja fainted too. But the girl came and sprinkled water upon them and gave them something to eat and drink and they were well again.

One day the girl said, 'If you want a good harvest, call the villagers and do as I say.' Her husband said, 'Ours is a caste of the fields, you too come and plough with me.' As the boy

was working in the fields with the villagers, the girl said, 'I will bring food for every one.' She cooked one grain of rice and took it with a pot of water to the fields. The people were very angry because she had brought so little and went to tell the Raja. The boy too was angry and beat his wife. But she said, 'Sit down all of you and I will feed you.' From the single grain of rice there was enough food for them all. When she had given them their food she disappeared and returned to her father Bhagavan.

The boy wept and could neither eat nor drink, for he said, 'I am like a crane whose mate has been killed by a hunter, and now where can I find my bird?'

6

THE RAKSA'S BRIDE

A Muria story from Nayanar, Bastar State

A Gaita and his wife had an only daughter and loved her greatly. When the girl became matured and was ready for marriage, a Dundi Raksa went to the Gaita's house with phuli liquor made from twelve outstills and pasra liquor from twelve outstills to ask that the girl might be betrothed to him. When he reached the house he saluted the Gaita and his wife and the woman washed his feet and made him sit down in the courtyard.

'Why have you come, friend?' said the Gaita. 'I hear that a flower has blossomed in your house and I desire to pick it and put it in my hair.' So saying the Raksa offered them liquor and the Gaita and his wife thinking that their visitor must be a very rich man accepted it and they drank together. The betrothal was thus settled and the marriage arranged for a fortnight later.

But when the Raksa went away and the Gaita and his wife realized who it was, they regretted their folly and were greatly worried at the thought that their daughter was going to a demon's home. They talked and talked all night how to save the girl from her fate and at last decided to hide her when the Raksa came and to say that she had run away with one of the chelik in the Ghotul.

So when they saw the Raksa coming they hastily hid their daughter in a great earthenware pot in the granary. When their

visitor arrived, the Gaita's wife washed his feet and made him sit down. Then she sat before him and began to weep, 'Our daughter has been carried away by one of the chelik and we do not know where she is.' But the Raksa said, 'I'll find her for you' and he went to the granary and pointing to the pot said, 'There she is.' The Gaita and his wife both swore that they knew nothing about it and explained to the Raksa that the girl must have got frightened of him and hid herself without their knowledge. 'If you will come after eight days more, we will celebrate the marriage.' To this the Raksa agreed and went away.

By now the girl was very frightened, for she realized that her parents could not save her as the Raksa was sure to get hold of her and marry her, so with the agreement of her mother she left the house and went to another village. On the date appointed the Raksa came and when he found that the girl was gone he was very angry. He searched the house and when he was sure that the girl was not there set out in search of her. With his long strides he quickly covered a great distance and soon from the top of a hill he saw the girl running for her life towards the jungle. As the Raksa was descending the hill the girl reached the kingdom of Belpuriha Raja. Here she found a very old woman threshing hirwa-pulse with a wooden door from the pigstye. She went to the old woman and said, 'O mother, you must be very tired threshing the pulse all day, let me help you.' The old woman gladly handed the wood to her and lay down on the ground to rest. The girl started threshing the hirwa pulse, but soon turned and beat the old woman instead until she died. She cut off her skin and put it on her own body so that she now looked like a miserable old woman.

By now the Raksa had reached another hilltop but when he looked round he could see no girl but only an old woman threshing pulse. Angry and disappointed he sat down on the hilltop looking in every direction for the girl to appear. She herself went into the old woman's house and cooked her food. After this she began to earn her living by husking rice and grinding wheat for the neighbours.

Among those who used to give her rice to husk were members of the Raja's household. The girl used to do her work at night. She would remove the old woman's skin and take a bath and then

being young and strong could do as much work as any other two women in the village. Soon the neighbours were all talking about the amount of work she did and husbands abused their wives on her account. The Raja heard of it and one night went secretly to her house and peeped through a crack in the wall. Presently he saw the girl remove the hideous skin that she wore all day and there before his eyes was the lovely figure of a maiden. He rushed into the house and burnt the skin. Despite the girl's protests he carried her away to his Palace and married her.

But the Raksa saw what was happening from his hiding-place on the hilltop and came down to carry off his betrothed. The girl warned her husband of what was in store and the Raja called his soldiers to fight the Raksa. After a long battle the Raksa was slain and his body burnt in the jungle.

For some days the girl lived very happily with the Raja, but one day she went to the jungle to pluck leaves for plates and cups, and as she came home she trod on the charred bones of the dead Raksa and fell down dead.

7

THE COW THAT GAVE NO MILK

A Gond story from Karanjia, Mandla District

There were seven brothers; all were married save the youngest. The others worked daily for their living, but he stayed at home and played. One day the six brothers thought, 'We do all the work and he does nothing. Let us tell our wives to pretend to be ill one day, and then he will have to cook and bring us the food.'

So the next day, one wife cried that she had a head-ache, another pretended to have fever, a third had pains in her belly, all lay down weeping in the house and refused to get up. When the youngest brother saw this, he took rice from the bin and pounded it. He put water to warm for the women and gave them the water to bathe in. He cooked them a fine meal and gave them to eat. For his brothers also he prepared a feast and putting it in a basket took it to the field.

The brothers put down their ploughs and came to eat. While they were eating, the boy went to see if the bullocks and ploughs

were all right. He caught hold of the first plough and by his magic called on the rest to follow him. In this way he ploughed with six ploughs at one time and most of the field was finished.

When the brothers came and saw it, they were much afraid. 'One of these days,' they thought, 'this boy will kill us and keep our wives.' So they attacked him at once, thinking it would be safer to kill him then and there. But the boy escaped and ran to his house. But he was afraid to stay there, and went away through the jungle to another land.

Presently he came to a city. Here was a Raja who had a very beautiful daughter. He also had a cow which allowed no one to milk her. The Raja had proclaimed that whoever could milk his cow would receive his daughter in marriage.

When the boy heard this, he went to the jungle. He found a char tree and said to it, 'O brother char!' The tree answered, 'O brother Durjan Kuar!' Now no one knew the boy's name, but the tree knew. Then the boy said, 'You take my skin, and give me yours.' The tree did as he said. When the boy put on the tree's skin, he looked dirty and wretched. He was covered with sores and holes, and flies crawled upon him.

In this horrid state, he went to an Ahir's house. That Ahir had no children. The boy stood at the door, saying, 'O mother, I die of thirst, give me some buttermilk to drink.' But the good-wife cried, 'Be off with you, stinking creature; who would give buttermilk to a boy covered with flies?' But Durjan Kuar said, 'Give me some, mother, and I'll look after the cows for you.' The Ahir said, 'Let him do it. It will save us trouble and we can just give him a leaf-cup of pej to drink every day.'

Durjan Kuar drank the buttermilk and some pej and went to the place where the cows were resting. On the way he ground up a lot of salt and rubbed it over his body. When the cows discovered that, they came and licked him all over. This he did every day.

One day he asked the Ahir which was the cow which refused to give milk for the Raja. 'Its name is Nathan,' said the Ahir. 'And the Raja's daughter's name is Sawat Kaniya. But don't you go near the cow or it will kill you.' But after a while Nathan also came to lick the salt from the boy's body, and in time whenever the boy called her she would come running to lick him.

After many days the Raja called his people to see who could milk Nathan the cow, but none could do it. When all had failed the Raja inquired whether all his subjects had come. They told him that there was a diseased fellow in the Ahir's house. 'Call him also,' said the Raja.

The boy came with a pot in one hand and a rope in the other. When the cow saw him coming she ran to him and began to lick his body. While she was doing this the boy milked her.

When the people saw this they were afraid, but the Raja could not deny his promise, and began to arrange the marriage. The girl was sad, but she thought, 'It is my fate to have a husband like this; what can I do?'

The Raja made a separate house for the boy, and gave him some cattle and a little money. After their marriage Durjan and his bride went to live together. All day the boy wore the skin of the char tree, but at night he used to go to the tree and put on his own skin. Then he would jump on one of the Raja's horses and ride round and round the town. Daily he did this and gradually the Raja's horses grew thin and weak. The Raja abused his servants.

One day while Durjan Kuar was going to change his clothes an old woman saw him and learnt the truth. The next day she went to Sawat Kaniya and told her what she had seen. That night Sawat Kaniya pretended to be asleep, but when the boy went out she followed him with the old woman. When the boy had changed his skin, they sprang on him and caught him. They brought him home, bathed him and dressed him in fine clothes and brought him to the Raja. 'This is the boy who rides your horses at night; it is Durjan Kuar, your son-in-law.'

The Raja was very pleased and gave Durjan Kuar half his kingdom. Presently his six brothers came there to sell wood, and Durjan kept them as servants in his house.

8

THE HARE-PRINCE

A Muria story from Atargaon, Bastar State

There was a Muria Raja who had seven wives, but no sons. The Raja's god was Kanda Hurra and he gave him seven mangoes.

Now the youngest wife had gone out to bathe at the end of her period and the Raja in her absence gave the mangoes to his six elder wives and they from jealousy threw the youngest wife's mango away. A hare came by and ate it, leaving the stone covered with its spittle.

When the youngest wife came home she asked, 'Where is my mango?' The others laughed at her and said, 'There is the stone on the ground.' She picked it up and somehow or other managed to swallow it with water.

In due time all the wives found that they were pregnant as a result of eating the mangoes and at last they were delivered. The youngest Rani gave birth to a hare. When the Raja saw this, he turned her out of the Palace, and she went weeping to the shore of the ocean. On the far side of the sea was a merchant; his wife called the girl over and kept her as her servant. They called the little baby Lamhaman Kuar Lal. So many days passed. After he had grown up a little the boy used to take off his hare skin and go to bathe in the middle of the night. One day the merchant's wife saw him. She waited till the next day to see if he would do it again, and then she called his mother, 'Bring seven pots of hot water and seven pots of cold water.' That night when the hare-boy went to bathe, the merchant's wife took his skin and burnt it. When his skin blazed up with the fire the boy felt the burning pain all over his body and ran screaming to his house. He fell senseless at the feet of his mother and the merchant's wife first poured hot water and then cold and fanned him. When he got cooler the boy recovered his senses and from that day onwards he lived as a boy.

After a little while the boy asked his mother where his father was and she told him. He said, 'I am going to get my kingdom.' His mother said, 'You will never get it, you will only get killed.' But he did not listen to her and went away to his kingdom. There he camped on the banks of a tank and sent a letter by the Kotwar to his father saying, 'Your son has come; give him his kingdom.'

When the Kotwar reached the Raja's office he found that it was closed, but the Ranis saw the Kotwar and read the letter. When they read it they were very frightened and said to the Kotwar, 'Go to this boy and say to him, "Your father says that when you come riding here on a horse with a peacock's tail he will give you

the kingdom.”’ The Ranis gave the Kotwar a hundred rupees to deliver this message.

When the boy heard what the Kotwar said he prayed to Kanda Hurra for help. Kanda Hurra told him to get laddu-sweets and gave him some wooden shoes. When the boy put these wooden shoes on his feet he was able to fly through the bazaar and buy the sweets. Then he flew to the jungle and there found many horses with peacock’s tails. He went to the biggest one and put his hand on its back. The horse tried to bite him, but he mounted it saying, ‘Don’t you know who I am? I am the son of the Muria Raja and if you trouble me I will call my god and he will eat you.’ They flew through the air back to the tank and the boy sent another letter to the Raja, saying, ‘I have come on the horse with the peacock’s tail, now give me my kingdom.’ This time also when the Kotwar went to the Palace he was caught by the Ranis who took the letter from him and gave him a hundred rupees to deliver to the boy this message: ‘The Raja says that beyond the sixteen rivers and the seven seas is a kadam tree and on its branches hangs a silken turban. Bring this to me and I will give you the kingdom.’

The boy went away, away, away over the sixteen rivers and the seven seas. But when he reached the kadam tree he found that Manjur Suria Gida had laid two eggs in the turban. The boy could not move the turban because of the eggs but he picked a flower from the tree. As he picked it his whole body grew very cold. He threw the flower into the fire and from the fire a Fire Maiden was born. Then from the eggs in the turban there came two chicks and the vulture threw them into the water and carried the boy off instead and dropped him somewhere. When he hit the ground his body smashed to pieces. The bones flew into one place, the flesh into another. When the Fire Maiden saw this she collected the bones and placed them together and when she scattered water over them the boy’s life returned. He went back to the tree and picked the turban and took it home. He wrote yet another letter to the Raja, saying, ‘I have brought the silken turban from the kadam tree beyond the sixteen rivers and the seven seas. Now give me my kingdom.’ But the Ranis caught the Kotwar before he could see the Raja and took the letter from him and bribed him to give this message to the boy: ‘The Raja says that in Bija-Nagar

Rija-Sahar there is a nangara drum. Bring it to me and I will give you the kingdom.' When the boy told the Fire Maiden about this message, she said to him, 'My old mother is a Rakshasin and she lives in the land of Rakshasin. There is a nangara drum. Take this necklace with you and when the Rakshasin come to eat you, give it to my old mother and she will give you the drum.' The Fire Maiden also taught him how to turn himself into a fly.

The boy went to the country of the Rakshasin. He turned himself into a fly and when the Rakshasin went out, one to cook, one to bathe, another to fetch firewood, he gave the necklace to the Fire Maiden's mother and she was very pleased and received him kindly. When the Rakshasin returned the boy turned himself into a fly. Now there grew much love between the boy and the Rakshasin's daughter and he stayed many days with her. One day he asked the girl, 'Where is your mother's soul?' She said, 'It is in a fish basket hidden in the roof.' One night the boy took the fish basket and the nangara drum, some sand from the river, a live coal, a bamboo stick and a small stone.

When the Rakshasin found that her soul had been stolen by the boy she ran after him. He threw the coal towards her and the whole country caught fire. But she was not stopped by the fire. Then he threw back the bamboo and it grew into a jungle twelve kos long. But she made a way through the jungle. Then he threw back a pebble and it turned into a mountain. But she climbed over the mountain. At last he threw a handful of sand and it became a river and her feet stuck in the sand and the boy escaped with her daughter.

This time when the boy sent the Kotwar the Raja himself saw him and heard from him the whole story of what had happened. Then the Raja went to the tank to greet his son and asked him to come home and take his kingdom. But the boy said, 'First, kill the six Ranis and their sons and the Kotwar who deceived me. Call my mother and greet her with honour, and then I will come home with you and take my kingdom.'

The Raja buried the Ranis and their sons alive and he killed the Kotwar. He sent for his youngest Rani and took her with Lamhaman Kuar Lal to his Palace and gave him the kingdom.

9

THE FAITHFUL BULL

A Baiga story from Arhwai, Balaghat District

There was a great tank in the forest and much grass on its banks. In the grass a peahen laid her eggs. One day a great fire swept across the jungle, but the peacock threw water all round the eggs and saved them. When they were hatched, from one egg came a peacock and from the other a boy and a bull. The peacock stayed with its mother, but the boy and the bull went to live by the tank. When they grew up, the bull began to wonder how it could get the boy married. Every day five peri used to come flying through the air in a chariot to bathe in the tank. They took off all their clothes and bathed naked. One day the boy went and stole the clothes and gave them to the bull. The bull hid them in his mouth. The boy climbed up a tree to see what would happen. The peri came searching for their clothes and came to the bull, and said, 'Give us our clothes and take one of us in exchange.' The bull gave them the clothes, and took the youngest sister instead. The four others flew away. The little peri was at first very frightened but when she saw the beautiful boy she was pleased and they were married.

They all went to live in a city. They built a big house outside the walls. The people went to the Raja and said, 'A young prince has come here and he has a lovely wife. Kill him and take the girl for yourself.' So the Raja sent for the boy and said, 'My eye is hurting me. Go and get me some tiger's milk as medicine.' The boy came home and began to weep, for he was sure that he would be killed. But the bull said, 'Don't be afraid. Go to the bazaar and get a lot of sweets and a small pot.' When he came with these things, the bull sent him off to the jungle. When he came to the tiger's lair he climbed a tree above it and dropped the sweets down in front of the door. The tiger's cubs ran out and ate the sweets. They were very pleased, and called to him to come down. So the boy came down and gave them a lot more sweets and they promised to help him. 'Dig a little hole in the ground and put the pot in it.' The boy climbed up the tree again. After a time the tigress came home. The cubs began to drink

her milk, but they cried, 'Your milk is sour today, we must spit it out.' And they ran to the pot and spat the milk into it. When the mother again went to the jungle to search for food, the boy came down, dug up the pot and prepared to depart. The cubs⁴ said, 'We are coming with you', and they went along together. But the tigress saw them and ran after them. The boy cried to the cubs to save him, so they killed their mother and they all reached home in safety.

Then someone told the Raja that the boy had come without bringing the milk and he got very angry and ordered him to be arrested. But the boy brought out the milk and showed the cubs. Then everyone was frightened. They said to the Raja, 'It is all due to that clever bull. You must have him killed or we will be ruined.'

The Raja had a mad elephant called Bhairomal. He arranged a fight between it and the bull, but the bull killed it. Then the Raja made a great iron pillar and ordered the bull to break it. The bull charged it with all its strength and broke it to pieces. One bit flew into the air, but the other stuck in its head and it died. Then the Raja caught the boy and killed him. When the boy was dead, the Raja took the beautiful peri to his house. But when he tried to embrace her, she flew away into the sky.

NOTE I

The Magic Obstacles Motif

This motif may be defined as one in which a hero or heroine attempting to escape from a pursuing enemy tries to check him by throwing down some small object which is immediately magnified into a formidable obstacle, generally of a kind resembling itself. There are two examples of this popular motif in the stories of this book. In Chap. IV, 8, the hero attempting to escape from a Rakshasa throws behind him a coal which causes a great fire, then a bit of bamboo which is transformed into a great jungle, then a pebble which becomes a mountain and then a handful of sand which becomes a broad river which finally thwarts the enemy. In Chap. VI, 2, the hero throws water from a gourd and it becomes a river. He flings down a stick and it becomes a jungle and he throws a stone which becomes a mountain which his pursuer cannot climb.

This motif is universal in the folk-tales of the world. Often, as in the text, the transformations are extensions of the objects used; a comb becomes a mountain range, a hearth-rug becomes a

thick forest. In the Gaelic and Irish versions, the protective objects are found in the ear of the horse on which the hero is riding. Macculloch gives Basuto, Kafir, Aino, Samoan, Siamese, Malagasan and other versions.¹ Clouston has given still other variants² and Penzer has a good summary of the literature at Vol. III, pp. 236 to 239. There appear to be only a few Indian parallels. There is one in Knowles's collection where the objects are given to the hero by the Rakshasa's daughter who is in love with him.³ Frere's story of 'Truth's Triumph' describes how the hero tries to escape from a Rakshas and hinders pursuit by creating first a great river, then a mountain and then a blazing forest which finally consumes his enemy.⁴

The motif has obvious affinities with the principles of sympathetic magic.

NOTE 2

The Crab in Indian Folklore

The crab appears in a uniformly favourable light in our pages. In Chap. IV, 1, we have the story of a crab which is faithful to its human wife in spite of ill-treatment. In Chap. IV, 2, we find a girl actually falling in love with a crab, who seems to be a very decent fellow, a hard worker and with a strong sense of humour. There is no hint that the girl knows this crab to be the hero in disguise. She appears to love it for its own crustacean qualities. In other tales the crab takes the place of the conventional mongoose as the traditional foe of the snake and in this capacity saves the hero's life. Kekramal Kshattri is a creature of learning and advises even the gods.

No less favourable to the crab is the Santal tale of Kora who, deciding not to travel without a companion, takes a crab with him tied up in a cloth. A Rakhas attacks Kora but the crab rushes at him and climbing up his body slits his windpipe with its claws. This incident leads to Kora making his fortune and getting a beautiful wife. But even marriage does not mean separation from his faithful crab who continues to sleep upon his breast. Two snakes issue from the nostrils of his bride and the crab seizes them and kills them. For reward the crab asks to be set free in a tank. Kora grants his request and goes to bathe in the tank daily in order to meet his friend.⁵ There is a very similar Ho story about a king's son who, being advised by a Sadhu always to have a companion on his journeys, takes a crab with him. In this case, the crab saves the boy from a snake and later kills two snakes issuing from the nostrils of his bride.⁶ I have discussed at length elsewhere the remarkable story of the she-crab that falls in love with a

¹ Macculloch, 171 ff.

² Knowles, 49.

³ Bompas, 276.

⁴ Clouston, *Popular Tales*, i, 439-443.

⁵ Frere, 47.

⁶ *J.B.O.R.S.*, ii, 292.

youth and commits *sati* for him.¹ Shovona Devi has a story of a lonely widow who lives with a crab and gets very fond of it. The crab returns her affection and calls her mother. It provides her with food and a daughter-in-law. At last it turns out to be a prince in a crab's shell.²

The crab's antagonism to snakes comes down from Hindu antiquity. There are several stories about it in the *Panchatantra*. In one a crab advises a pair of storks, whose fledgelings are constantly devoured by a snake, to strew fish from the burrow of a mongoose to the snake's hole. They do so and the mongoose follows the path till it comes to the snake's hole and kills it. In another story a Brahmin woman gives her son, as he is starting on a journey, a crab in a pot as his companion. One day when he is asleep under a tree with the pot beside him, a snake approaches but desiring to know what is in the pot put its head in to see and is immediately killed by the crab. In another *Panchatantra* story, a stork scares the fish in a tank by telling them that fishermen are going to fish there and persuades them to let it carry them to a safer place. The fish are taken one by one by the stork, not to another tank but to their own disaster. The stork then picks up a crab, but the crab sees many fish bones and dried fish and begs the stork to take it back to the tank so that it may persuade the remaining crabs also to be removed. The stork agrees and takes it back, but when it reaches the tank the crab severs its head from its body with its claws and falls back in safety to the water.³

One of these stories is reproduced in the *Katha Sarit Sagara*. 'Once on a time a snake came and ate the nestlings of a certain crane as fast as they were born. That grieved the crane. So, by the advice of a crab, he went and strewed pieces of fish from the dwelling of a mongoose as far as the hole of the snake, and the mongoose came out, and following up the pieces of fish, eating as it went on, was led to the hole of the snake, which it saw and entered, and killed him and his offspring.'⁴ The crab is thus generally regarded as grateful and kindly and the tradition of Xavier's crab (*Charybdis cruciferum*) is quite in character. This crab is said to have retrieved the Crucifix of St Francis Xavier which was lost while the Saint was crossing the Gulf of Mannar. Another story is told of Xavier's Rosary, the hero of which is the Rosary Crab (*Carpilius maculatus*) which has eleven red spots in the form of a semi-circle on its carapace. In Mandla, it is said that when a Gond Raja was returning from the wars, he found himself unable to cross a flooded river; a crab carried both warrior and horse over the stream; the marks of the hoofs can be seen to this day.

The crab is generally regarded as monogamous and a model

¹ J.B.O.R.S., ii, 284.

² See Edgerton, ii, 294f. and 324.

³ Devi, 162 ff.

⁴ Penzer, v, 61.

of domestic fidelity. The affection and care shown by the male crab when the female is moulting has been noted in the case of swimming crabs, as also the fact that among burrowing crabs a burrow is occupied by only one male and one female. For this reason it is said that Rama was bound to be an example of chastity to the world as he was born under the constellation of Cancer.¹

Curiously, however, the Uraon use the crab as a symbol of a lover. The following songs were recorded by W. G. Archer in the Ranchi District.

Sarhul

Bitten by a crab, girl
Who will dress it for you?
Your husband is away in Bhutan
Who will dress it for you?

Karam

You went to pick flowers, girl
But you yielded to the crab's hole
The crab caught you
Who will free you?
Your boy is in the other land
Who will save you?

Karam

You set out for the Karam
But the den of the tiger lured you
In the crab's hole you tumble a girl
In the crab's hole you rock with her.

Many similar songs describe how a girl, on her way to pick flowers, was tempted by 'the crab's hole', how she dallied there and struggled and how hard it was to get away.²

But the Pardhan of Mandla believe that the crab's marriage was the first ever to be celebrated on earth and a model to all later marriages. The crab asked, and obtained, a boon from Bhagavan that it should have one marriage only and no others.

Even after death the crab's benevolence does not cease. Its body is generally regarded in India as good for medicine. The so-called dhobi crab is said to be good for ear-ache. The juice of another crab is considered to be useful in cases of pneumonia. Small crabs, the pea crab and the ball crab, are given for impotence. The Paniyan of Malabar have been recorded as eating land crabs

¹ S. T. Moses, 'Crab Folklore', *Man in India*, iv, 165.

² W. G. Archer, 'Twenty Uraon Poems', *Man in India*, xxiii, 10 ff.

in order to prevent the hair turning grey. In the *Kakkatara Sadayaka Vimana* there is a story of a Bhikkhu who suffered acutely with ear-ache. Nothing gave him relief until he came one day to the door of a husbandman who was about to eat a meal of boiled rice and crab curry. The husbandman shared his meal with the Bhikkhu whereupon his pain left him as by magic and he felt that he had been bathed with a hundred jars of cold water.¹ A traditional account of the medicinal properties of the crab declares that 'the species of black crab is strength-giving and heat-giving in its potency and tends to destroy the deranged vayu. The whole species is laxative and diuretic in its effect and tends to bring about an addition of fractured bones.'²

So too the crab is used by the Angami Naga in the treatment of intermittent fever;³ by the Rengma Naga as a purge;⁴ by the Sema Naga to cause suppuration and thus extract foreign matter from a wound.⁵ In Mandla the white *dhudhia* or milk crab is given to promote lactation in nursing mothers; the Gond of this area treat a bad cold with hot crab soup. The Pardhan use the crab as a purge. It is carefully cooked; and a little is given at night, followed by a heavy dose in the morning. The Ahir give living crabs to a cow suffering from an infected wound.

The crab is also popular as food. It is eaten all over central India and in Bastar fried crab is a very acceptable accompaniment to a drink of salphi juice. Moses gives a rhyme from the *Yadavvanad* of the Coorg—'Eat river crabs and you will grow up a clever man; eat paddy-field crabs if you wish to become as brave as a tiger; eat crabs living in damp ground if you wish to become master of your house'.

It is said, however, that among the Hindus the castes which practise carcinophagy are generally those inferior in the social scale.

The crab is offered by certain tribes in worship. During the Sarhul festival the Oraon perform a ceremonial frying of crabs. Women from each family put a live crab into the hearth and hang up above it a few other live crabs. As the burning crab crackles in the fire and the others get their legs straightened and stiffened by the heat, the women exclaim, 'May the urid dal and other pulses in our fields burst forth as this crab is bursting in the fire. May pods of our urid and other pulses grow in clusters and resemble this cluster of the stiffened legs of the crab'.⁶

At harvest festivals the Rengma Naga go out to catch crabs which are ceremonially eaten with the new grain.⁷ The Lhota Naga,

¹ See K. P. Mitra, *Man in India*, vi, 304.

² *Susruta Samhita* (Eng. trans. K. K. L. Visagratna, 1926), iii, 491.

³ Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, 100.

⁴ Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, 117.

⁵ Hutton, *op. cit.*, 102.

⁶ Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs*, 211 ff. See also *J.B.O.R.S.*, xii, 230.

⁷ Mills, *op. cit.*, 86.

use crabs in a scapegoat ceremony if a chicken or goat is not available.¹ In Mandla the Gond and other tribes use the carapace of the crab as a lamp at Diwali; it is filled with oil and a small wick is lit. If any child is sick, this lamp is waved round it and carried out to a cross-roads, thus removing the disease. At the same festival, the Gond put these crab-lamps under their bean-stalks with the idea that the bean pods will grow long and strong like the legs of a crab. The Pardhan put them among the chilli plants to promote a good crop. The same notion impels them sometimes to tie a crab's claw round the neck of a baby so that its teeth will be strong as claws.

The remarkable Ongon Gota, or Crab Festival, of the Gadaba has been described by C. von Furer-Haimendorf. At the end of the rice harvest, the unmarried boys and girls set up a menhir and put crabs on branches before it. Later they roast the crabs. Crabs are again associated with the dead at the Balo Biro festival for the departed, when they are cooked with new rice and beans and distributed to kinsmen. Possibly the associations of crabs in this Chapter may explain why the Gadaba connect them with the dead.²

In dealing with a case of snake-bite, the Pardhan magician uses a crab and spider charm. He addresses the poison: 'The eight-legged crab, the nine-legged spider, the old man of the Potta clan, bid you depart.' The crab's shell is occasionally put to a less creditable use. If a sorcerer gets a little bone from the skull of a girl who died a virgin, puts it in a crab's shell with oil to make a lamp and burns it while he sacrifices a black cock, he can work a destructive magic against an enemy.

The crab, like the frog, is sometimes used in rain-magic. 'When the Lhotas wanted rain they caught a land crab and tied him by the leg in a nullah, putting an egg beside him. The crab's business was to call the rain spirit, and the egg was put there for the crab to give to the spirit. If this resulted in rain the crab was let go again, but if no rain came the unfortunate crab was hung on a tree and left to die, as being an incapable and useless intermediary.³ In Mandla in a time of drought, the Gond sometimes tie a frog and a crab together to a reed taken from the river. The Pardhan call to it, 'Come out, Kekramal Pande (O learned crab) and look round at the plain'. The idea is that the crab will never leave its hole except at a time of heavy rain. It is said in Mandla that so long as the crab stops the mouth of its hole with mud, the weather will be dry: when it keeps its hole open, the rain will fall. At the end of the hot months, in the dry parched days, 'the crabs cry all along the river like thirsty children.'

¹ Mills, *The Lhota Nagas*, 135.

² *The Angami Nagas*, 401.

³ *J.R.A.S.B., Letters*, vol. ix, 158.

NOTE 3

In the Baiga tale of the monkey boy and in Story 2 of this Chapter from Bastar and the Gond story from Mandla, there is a curious association that the hero after removing his skin disguise leaves his bride in her bed and rides the king's horses round and round the town. There does not seem to be any logical connexion between changing one's skin and riding on horses, but it exists in tales from widely separated areas.

NOTE 4

The curious connexion with the char tree (*Buchanania lanzan*, Spreng.) in one story from Mandla and another from Bastar should be noted. In the first the char tree allows the hero to hide his skin inside it and in the other it lends the hero its own wrinkled and ugly bark to wear.

NOTE 5

The Shining Bride

We get very little in the way of aesthetic description in these folk-tales. The most common means of describing beauty is to say that the hero or heroine shine like the sun. There is a shining heroine in one of Stokes's folk-tales who is so bright that people can work all night by the light her body gives.¹ In a Santal tale, a princess hidden in a bel fruit is so brilliant that the youth who splits it open falls dead on seeing her.² In a tale from Ceylon, a princess seeing the splendour of the prince falls senseless to the ground.³ There is a Shining Maiden in the *Katha Sarit Sagara* who illuminates a whole wood although it is night.⁴ Balder was described as so fair of countenance and bright that he shone of himself and the same attribute has been recorded of several of the Christian saints.⁵

NOTE 6

Marriage with Supernatural Beings

There have been many cases, says Bompas, of Santal marrying Bonga girls, and he gives a number of examples.

'In Darbar village there are two men who married Bonga. One of them was very fond of playing on the flute and his playing attracted a Bonga girl who came to him looking like a human girl while he was tending buffaloes. After a time she took him

¹ Stokes, 158.² Parker, iii, 254.⁴ Penzer, vi, 1.³ Bompas, 462.⁵ Penzer, vi, 11.

to her house but he was terrified at seeing a number of tigers and leopards there. She used to visit him secretly until he was properly married to a human wife and during his connexion with her he became rich and prosperous. After he married he saw the Bonga girl no more. In another case the girl spirited a youth away into a pond. Under the water he found dry land and houses and stayed in the Bonga country for about six months. After he had come back and settled down to normal life again he still used to visit his Bonga wife every two or three months.¹

The Masami Koli of Tehri-garhwal State trace their origin to a Koli who once danced with a party of ghosts and married one of them.²

C. von Fürer-Haimendorf has a Chenchu story of a hunter who marries a spirit woman. She brings him wealth and bears him a child but the hunter's first wife is jealous and beats the boy. The spirit woman goes into the jungle: he follows her: she gives him the child, turns into a bat and flies away. He becomes poor again.³

Throughout central India there is a belief that a man can capture a Churelin, the ghost of a woman who has died in pregnancy or child-birth. This being, who is commonly regarded as terrible and ill-omened, sometimes appears in beautiful and attractive shape.⁴ I will give a few examples of this, for they throw a good deal of light on the stories recorded in this Chapter.

In Patlabera, near Keskai (Bastar), a Halba was sitting in his field playing on his chikkara. A Churelin came and sat on his instrument. As he sang he closed his eyes and she danced invisible upon it. He did this for many days until at last he opened his eyes and saw her. Then he 'bound' her with his charms and married her. She lived with him for twenty years and seven children were born to them. But on the day of the marriage of their youngest child she rose into the air with a cry and disappeared.

Another story comes from Kondagaon (Bastar). One day Sital Panara of that town was passing by the grave of a Churelin when she rose from her grave and ran after him. The Panara immediately recited some mohini mantra (love-charms) and 'bound' the Churelin in his spell. He tied a knot in her hair and made her dance. He took away her own clothes and dressed her in his dhoti. Then he took her back to his house and married her by a simple ceremony of haldi and bangles. He secretly buried her clothes in his compound. The Panara lived happily with the Churelin who bore him seven children. In time each of these were married and at every marriage the Churelin begged her husband to return her clothes so that she could dance, but he refused. But at the marriage of the seventh and last child, the guests pleaded with him to grant his wife's request, and he dug the clothes up and gave

¹ Bompas, 379.

² *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. i. Part iii, B, 23.

³ Fürer-Haimendorf, 216 ff.

⁴ Cf. *The Baiga*, 367 ff.

them to her. She put them on and danced before them; then after a little while vanished into the air.

A realistic tale comes from Kumli (Bastar). One day a Rawat was playing his flute as he sat in the fields grazing cattle. As he played, a Raksin came and danced to the music. When the Rawat saw her he bound her by his charms to the ground and drove iron nails into her head, thus destroying her power of evil. He married her and had seven daughters from her. He married them all. One day he brought the youngest daughter to his house. Her mother said to her, 'Clean my hair and catch the lice that are tickling my head'. The girl began to clean the hair; she found the nails that had been driven into the skull and pulled them out. The woman immediately became a Raksin again and disappeared.

It will be noticed that in every case the man who keeps the Churelin is not an aboriginal, but a member of one of the lower Hindu castes living in an aboriginal village. These people are generally credited by the aboriginals with a particular knack of achieving connexion and intercourse with supernatural beings and at the great festivals of the State scores of Ganda and Halba mediums fall into trance and dance ecstatically before the gods. It will be noticed also that in every case the Churelin dances, that she is bound by charms, cohabits with her captor for many years, bears him seven children and finally disappears on recovering her original garments.

The disappearance of the supernatural wife may here be connected with the belief that the Ondar Muttai or Churelin is bound to return to her own country after a certain time. 'In Jeth (July) at the time of violent wind and rain', said a Muria, 'the Ondar Muttai goes to her own land, the Raksogarh, and mingles with her own people there'. The Hill Maria said the same thing, that after three years the Churelin goes to her own country and I have found a similar tradition among the Bison-horn Maria. What happens there to this poor ghost is not revealed.

One thing at least is certain, that there can be no permanent alliance between human and supernatural beings. The celestial bride disappears either after a fixed term of years, when she recovers her original garments, or when she is beaten by her husband. The Santal Dukhu married a Bonga girl, and prospered exceedingly, but he could not help quarrelling with her and at last smacked her head whereon she went away, taking her child with her, and was seen no more.¹

NOTE 7

Divination by Shooting Arrows

There is a somewhat similar example of divination by shooting arrows in Hislop,² where Lingo fires an arrow into the air and tells

¹ Bompas, 212.

² Hislop, Part iii, 17.

his brother that fire will be found where it falls. The seven daughters of the giant Rikad Gawadi find the arrow and desire to marry the archer. So also in an Agaria legend Jwala Mukhi sends a red arrow into the air, and where it falls the iron-smelters discover ore.¹

NOTE 8

The Three Worlds

The characteristically Hindu idea of the three worlds provides the village story-teller with a stage on three levels, thus greatly extending the possible range of his hero's adventures. These three worlds are called in Gondi Porrobhum, Nadumbhum and Adibhum and in Chhattisgarhi Uparpur, Manjhpur and Kalepur or Tarpur. They must never be confused with heaven or hell. Porrobhum is not a place where the virtuous dead are rewarded nor is Adibhum a place of punishment for the wicked. It is true that the Upper World is the residence of Bhagavan or Mahapurub while the Under World is normally occupied by Rakshasas and demons. But there is never any hint that the ghosts of the dead are to be found in the Under World and though according to Hinduized aboriginals the souls of the departed go to Bhagavan in the Upper World for judgement, they do not remain there. In some cases, they may even be punished in the Upper World before being sent down to live again on earth. The other gods generally live in the Middle World though they are sometimes represented as going to dig roots or pay visits in the Under World. Lingo and his brothers are described as having come from the Upper to the Middle World just like early settlers migrating from one country to another. The Upper and the Middle Worlds are connected in some stories by a silken rope, in some by a spider's thread; sometimes the hero ascends to the Upper World on the back of a magic horse. The crow is the usual messenger of Bhagavan. His seven daughters often come down to visit the Middle World; sometimes they come to dance, sometimes to bathe. The horses of Bhagavan also come down to pasture in the fields. The heroes of these tales go most commonly to the Under World, for naturally that, as the place of danger, is also the place of high adventure. But they do sometimes also mount to the Upper World and there is no doubt that there is a slight but definite difference of atmosphere. In the Upper World adventures we have the impression that the sun is always shining, whereas in the Under World, for all the wonder and beauty of many of the Rakshasas' habitations, there is an air of dread and gloom.

¹ *The Agaria*, 103, 173.

NOTE 9

The Khatpati

The Khatpati or 'keeping to one side of the bed' seems to be an extension of the idea of sitting dharna,¹ that ancient form of non-violent non-co-operation by which people managed to get their own way. The Khatpati, which occurs frequently in folk-tales and is universal in aboriginal India as an easy means by which a wife can put pressure on her husband, is of course simply a form of sulking. But unlike ordinary sulking it does not necessarily mean that the person who practises it is in a bad temper. The Gond wife, like the eighteenth century lady of fashion who could not drink tea without a stratagem, prefers, if possible, to get what she wants not directly by asking for it but by a display that will excite at once her husband's love and his generosity. So if she wants a new sari or ornaments or if she wants to go on a visit somewhere or whatever it may be, she does not say so, but she goes to the darkest corner of the house and lies down with her face to the wall. If she has a bed she lies on one extreme edge with her back to her husband, clinging to the bed with both hands to prevent herself being turned over. The husband then has to go through the lengthy, prescribed, ritual of persuasion, apology and divination to console his wife and discover what she wants, a performance of the utmost solace to the female heart.

This trick occurs frequently in the tales and probably is inserted far more often than appears in the text. It is noticeable that, in the tales at least, it is practised by men and boys as well as by women. A Raja goes to his 'house of anger'; the boy who wants a bride lies on his bed and refuses to speak. Sometimes an old woman is called in and is promised extravagant presents if she can make the sulker laugh.

¹ See Ehrenfels, *Mother-right in India*, 150, and Russell and Hiralal, ii, 267.

THE YOUNGEST BROTHER

STORIES describing the adventures of a younger brother are common in the literature of the world. He is generally the youngest of seven and the special affection he kindles in his parents, though sometimes his own idleness and stupidity, rouses the jealousy of his elders. They try to kill him either at home or when they go off on their adventures and he follows them. His attempted destruction forms an important part of the plot.

Folk-tales both in India and elsewhere often show a very strong sympathy for the under-dog. We should not imagine that there is any social or religious element in this; it is simply that the story-teller recognizes the sentimental attractiveness of poverty, youth or weakness and the romance of bringing people from weakness to strength and poverty to riches. This, of course, explains the enormous appeal of the novelette in Europe describing the marriage of maidservants with titled persons or of the plain man who by some lucky fate suddenly becomes rich. So in our stories it is the youngest son who is triumphant. It is the one-eyed man who can see where others are blind. It is the lame boy who travels furthest.¹

Beside the sentimental attractiveness of this idea, it also has a definite technical value which was long ago pointed out by Andrew Lang. 'In adventures if there is to be accumulating interest someone must fail. The elder sons would attempt the adventure first, consequently the youngest must be the successful hero.'² In many stories adventures are repeated over and over again, each brother enduring and daring until finally the youngest succeeds.

But this will not explain the quite definite note of hostility to the younger brother that is evident in many of the Indian tales. In this book, even where he is successful the younger brother is not always a very good or steady character. In one story, he throws away his brothers' food as he carries it to the fields. In another, instead of working he plays about with little traps. Even in the Lingo legend, which is the *locus*

¹ Macculloch, 370 ff., has studied this subject in some detail.

² A. Lang, in R. Cox, *Cinderella* (Folk-Lore Society, 1893), xiii.

classicus for this type of story,¹ the hero is not altogether admirable from the family and domestic point of view. For instead of working in the fields he spends his time playing on his instruments, thus distracting everybody from their proper business. I think that it is not improbable that the hostility to the younger brother has arisen as a result of the bhauji-dewar relationship. Throughout central India as well as in many other parts of the sub-continent a younger brother stands in a privileged position in regard to his elder brothers' wives. He can flirt and joke with them to the borders of decency and beyond. If in his elder brother's absence he possesses one of them, little is thought of it. His embraces like his words are privileged. After an elder brother's death he has the first claim upon the widow and in many parts, should she marry some other man, compensation has to be paid to the younger brother.² This is the central theme of the great story of Lingo, in which the hero is depicted as valiantly resisting, not a temptation to sin, but a privilege which is his by right. It is obvious that such a situation will often give rise to jealousy, particularly since the elder brothers are strictly tabooed from even speaking to the younger brother's wife.

I

THE TWELVE BROTHERS

A Baiga story from Kawardha State

An old Baiga and his wife had twelve sons and one daughter. Of these only the youngest son and the girl were unmarried. When the parents died, their children had great difficulty in getting enough to eat. But they used to hunt deer and pig in the forest and dig for roots. They got so hungry that at last they decided that they would go to a jungle where they might cut bewar.

Every day they went to clear and cut their bewar, and the youngest brother brought them their pej in the afternoon. He used to put pej in an earthen pot and rice in a basket and water in a pot made of leaves, and carry it all in his kawar. As he went he used to sprinkle some of the rice and pej on the ground

¹ See my *The Muria and their Ghotul*.

² A full account is given by Shamrao Hivale in 'The Dewar-Bhauji Relationship', *Man in India*, xxiii, 157-67.

so that if ever his brothers troubled him he would have a Palace and an army there. How could the brothers know that he was throwing away their food?

But one day the eldest brother hid in the grain-bin and saw how big a load of food their sister prepared. Then he followed and saw the boy scatter the rice and pe^j on the ground. He ran ahead by another path so that when the youngest brother arrived in the bewar-clearing he was busy with the rest. When he told his brothers what he had seen they were very angry and decided to kill the boy.

The boy called to them, 'Come, and eat, brothers.' They answered, 'O yes, we're coming', and attacked him with their axes. They struck him and threw him in the mud and went off home saying, 'Now you can cut all the eleven clearings. We're not going to work any more.'

The boy lay there weeping for a long while, and presently Mahadeo and Parvati, who were playing hide-and-seek in the forest, heard his cries. Parvati said, 'Listen, there's somebody in trouble; let's go and see what is the matter.' Mahadeo said, 'That's the way of women; they always want to interfere in the affairs of other people.' But they both went, and the boy told them his story. They said to him, 'Don't cry any more. Take these twelve axes and put them in a line, and take hold of the first by the handle and say, "O Guru Mahadeo and Parvati, get these clearings cut for me."' Then they went away.

The boy put the axes in a line as they had said, and taking hold of the handle of the first, said, 'O Guru Mahadeo, get all the bewar cut for me.' And at once those axes flew through the air and began to cut at the trees of their own accord until all the ground was cleared. This was done before evening, and by sunset the boy had sowed all the clearings with the chaff of rice. Then he went home.

In the morning he called his brothers and said, 'Come and see if the bewar are ready or no.' They did not want to go but they were anxious about their axes. When they reached the clearings, rice was already growing. Then they built thirteen shelters for driving away pig and birds.

From that day onwards it was the elder brother who went daily for the food. He went with a bow and arrow. One day he met

two old birds, a hawk and his wife. They had a beautiful daughter and a Laru pig. The hawk said to her husband, 'This boy will kill our pig.' So she said, 'Let him sleep with our daughter and he'll forget all about the pig.' So the old bird called to the boy, 'Come, old man, stay in our house.' The mother laughed and said, 'He's not an old man, he's our son-in-law.' The boy went to stay with them and in his honour they killed a chicken and had a grand feast.

When night fell the old man slept with his wife by the door, and the boy slept with their daughter by the warmth of the fire.

During the night the old woman said to her husband, 'Do something to his arrows.' So the hawk pecked away at the arrows till all the inside was removed.

In the morning the boy got up and took his leave.

The next night when that boy was sitting on his platform watching the crops, a wild pig came and with a great noise began to dig up the rice. The boy shot at it with his arrow but the arrow was weak because its pith had been removed, and it broke. Then the pig was enraged and it charged the shelter and broke it and killed the boy.

Then each of the eleven brothers died in this manner. Each slept with the hawk's daughter, and each had his arrows spoilt. At last only the youngest brother remained. But there were also the eleven wives.' 'What shall we do?' they said. 'We will all be your wives.' The youngest brother was pleased, and he told the eldest wife to cook his food for the first four days.

He himself went away to the north, where live the twelve Lohasur brothers, the thirteen Tamesur brothers and the fourteen Agyasur brothers. He greeted them and told his story. 'Make me,' he said, 'so strong a bow that it will need twelve men to lift it, and every kind of arrow.'

Then they set to work and they made him a great bow, and they made eight great arrows. There was Aginban, the Arrow of Fire, and Kurpaban, the Arrow like a Scythe, and Bislaban, the Poison Arrow, and Chakkarban, the Whirling Arrow, and Butchiban, the Blunt Arrow, and Bakkarban, the Arrow that Clears Everything Away, and Bindnaban, the Arrow that Bores Holes, and Bilopinban, the Arrow that Utterly Destroys.

Then he went to a goldsmith to have his clothes made of gold, and he hid all these things.

On his way home, he was met by the old hawk who invited him to stay the night in his house. As it was late and he was tired, the boy agreed, and that night he slept, as his brothers had done, with the girl in the warmth of the fire. The old bird began to peck at the arrows, but they were so hard that his beak broke in half, and in great pain he called for his wife to comfort him.

In the morning the boy got up and went to the bewar. He saw the shelters broken and his brothers' bones scattered on the ground. He hid behind a thorn-bush and waited for the pig to come. But first came a deer, and sang to him, 'If you must kill, little brother, then kill me, but not while I am drinking.' Then came a barking-deer and said the same thing, and a peacock and its mate, and every kind of bird; even the ants came and sang their song to him.

And at last with thunder came the pig. The boy called on his arrows by their names, but it was Butchiban who said, 'Let me go.' Its blow was so hard that the pig thought the whole world had fallen on it.

The boy took a sevenfold cloth and collected his brothers' bones and laid them on it. He spread another cloth above them, and bade them come together and return to life. They picked up the pig and carried it home.

They cut it up, and put the meat in one house, the fat in another, the bones in a third. The old hawk was there with his daughter, begging for a little meat. They gave him some and went to the jungle to dig roots. But the hawk's daughter stayed behind.

Before they went they said to the girl, 'You may eat the flesh, but don't open the door of the house where the fat is.' But when the girl began to roast the meat, she found she wanted some fat, so she went to that house and took some. When she put it on the fire it melted and put the fire out. Then she was frightened. 'Where can I get fire?' she cried. She searched everywhere, but found nothing.

At last she came to a cotton tree so tall that it reached right up to the sky. It was only one arm's length away from the sky. She cried, 'If it be true that you are a good cotton tree, bend down.' It did so and she sat in the topmost branches and it lifted

her right up to the sky. From there she looked all over the world for fire.

Away in the forest she saw smoke rising. It was a Rakshasa, who was cooking his food. The girl said to the cotton tree, 'If you really are a cotton tree, bend down and put me on the earth.' It did so and the girl went as fast as she could towards the Rakshasa's house. There she found his daughter, his daughter-in-law and his wife sitting with him. The girl crept up behind them, but the daughter-in-law saw her shadow. They searched for her and soon caught her. 'I've come for fire,' she said. The old woman said, 'You can't have my husband's fire, or mine, or my daughter's, but you can take my daughter-in-law's fire. Put it in a stick and carry it home.' She also gave the girl some rye. 'Scatter this on the road as you go along', she said. 'It will stop the fire from going out.'

When she reached the house again, the girl began to cook. In the evening the twelve brothers and their eleven wives came home with loads of roots on their heads. They stayed that night feasting, and in the morning they went away. Then it began to rain and all along the path the girl had come the rye sprang up. Then the Rakshasa's daughter-in-law was able to follow the path and find the girl. She came to that house and turned the girl into a fly by her magic. She began to cook and the girl settled on the wall.

When the brothers returned in the evening, the youngest was the only one who realized what had happened. The Rakshasa's daughter-in-law said, 'Come, all of you and eat.' When they had eaten, she said, 'I have come to marry the eldest brother.' So he made her his junior wife. After staying with him for some time she said she wanted to go and see her parents. So she went with her husband, but when they got to her home, the Rakshasa ate the boy. Then she married each of them in turn, till eleven had been eaten by the Rakshasa. So once again only the youngest brother was left alive. But when she came for him, he was sitting on a horse with his bow and arrow ready. When it saw the Rakshasa's daughter-in-law, the horse got on her and possessed her. The horse wounded her shoulders with its feet.

Then they all went along together towards the Rakshasa's house. On the way they came to a lake, and the girl asked the

boy to wash his face. Now that water was very bad: whoever washed in it, their eyes broke. The horse whispered to him not to wash. So he refused. Then the girl asked him to make some bread with the water, but he again refused. When they got near her house, she cried out, 'Oho, I have got a big goat here, but I can't hold him, he's running away.' When they heard that they came running out to catch the boy.

But he fought them with his Kurpaban and killed them all, all save the girl whom he turned into a fly. He hid the fly in a tree and rested by the side of a lake. Then Butchiban gave him a dream. 'Be careful', he said. 'There is still one Rakshasa left.' So the boy got ready and kept the Bindnaban near him. Then the Rakshasa's daughter-in-law came to attack him, but he hit her so hard with Bindnaban that she passed blood. But now he had no arrows left. The girl seized him and threw him down, and passed blood into his mouth. But the boy by his magic turned himself into Bilopinban and drove himself into her vagina, and then on into her belly. When he was in her belly, he enlarged himself and the Rakshasin burst into little bits. Then he collected his arrows, and searched for his brothers' bones, and once more brought them back to life.

There was still living a little sister of that Rakshasa. She was a good girl, and the boy thought he would marry her. On the way home he saw the hawk's daughter sitting in a tree in the form of a fly. He turned her back into a bird-woman. When they got home, the boy married the little Rakshasin. But soon after, when the twelve brothers went out hunting, leaving their wives at home, the eleven wives who had always wanted their youngest brother, killed his wife and buried her.

During the hunt, all the eleven brothers together were only able to kill one sambhar, but the youngest brother alone killed eleven sambhar. This made the other brothers angry and afraid, and they beat their little brother and drove him away.

He went to the kingdom of a Gond Raja and the Raja's daughter fell in love with him. She refused to eat or drink till the Raja let her marry him. Before marriage, those two had slept together, and so their love was greater. Then the boy took his bride to the place where he used to throw away the rice and pej, and there was a splendid Palace and an army grown up. There he found his

brothers very poor, selling wood and roots. He called them and bought some things from them, paying them a few pice more than they asked. They did not recognize him. The boy asked them many questions, and they grew frightened, thinking that he was going to kill them. At last he sent for an Ahir and bade him get hot water and the finest clothes, and he made himself known to them, and they wept together for joy, and the boy kept them all in his Palace.

2

THE YOUNGEST SON

A God-dhuka Lohar story from Raipur District

A Raja had seven sons. In his fields he sowed every kind of grain, but sambhar and pigs did great damage to the crops. Every night he used to go to guard his fields. But when the boys grew up he sent them instead. First he sent his eldest son. The boy kept awake for a short time, then went to sleep and the pigs came and ate the crop. When the Raja came in the morning and found his son sleeping and much damage in the fields, he was very angry and beat the boy severely. The next night the Raja sent his second son, but the same thing happened, and so with all the brothers until it came to the turn of the youngest. He lit fires at the four corners and in the middle of the field and cut off the tops of his fingers, rubbing in chillies, so that he could not sleep for the pain. At midnight Bhagavan's seven horses came to eat the crops. The young boy caught one of the horses and drove the rest of them away. This horse said to the boy: 'Let me go and if ever you are in trouble, call for me and I will come to help you.' So the boy let it go.

The next morning when the Raja found that the field was undamaged he was very pleased. He drove the other sons into exile, but the youngest son was lonely and followed his brothers into the forest. When they saw him they beat him and wanted to kill him. But the eldest brother said: 'Don't kill him, we'll keep him as our servant.'

After a time they came to another kingdom where the Raja had a beautiful unmarried daughter. Soon after they arrived the

Raja proclaimed that whoever could jump his horse over the Palace could marry his daughter. Now the six brothers went to visit the Raja, but they sent the youngest boy to water their horses in the river. He found an old woman there and asked her to take care of the horses, promising her five gold mohurs if she did not tell his brothers. He himself went to bathe and called on Bhagavan's horse to come and help him. He rode on the horse to the Raja's Palace and easily jumped over it.

Many princes had come to the Palace but none of them were able to jump over it. As they sat disappointed and smoking their pipes, the Raja's daughter came out on an elephant and looked at the princes but saw none who pleased her. The Raja asked whether there were any other men in his kingdom and the six brothers said that they had a servant who was looking after the horses. The Raja told them to call him. The boy came in tattered clothes and bare feet, but when the girl saw him she was pleased and said that was the man she would marry. Everybody thought she was mad, but three times she rode round the Palace on her elephant and every time she chose the youngest brother in his tattered clothes. The princes were very angry and went to their homes. But the Raja married his daughter to the boy and gave them many presents.

Then the six brothers thought, 'Let us entice him with sweet words and kill him in the forest, keeping the girl for ourselves.' As they went home, therefore, the brothers said, 'Little brother, we are very thirsty, please bring us some water.' The boy went to the well and the brothers threw him in, filled it up with mud, and carried off the girl. But the boy called on Bhagavan's horse for help and the seven horses flew down and dug out the earth and the boy jumped on the back of one of the horses and flew home and told his father everything that had happened.

When the six brothers reached home they found the youngest brother waiting for them. The Raja killed them, and the young boy and his wife lived happily and ruled over the kingdom.

3

ESCAPE FROM THE PIT

A Kuruk story from Karikot on the Indrawati River, Bastar State

An old man and his wife lived in a village. They had seven sons, of whom six were married, the youngest remaining unmarried. When the old parents died, the seven brothers lived together. The six elder brothers worked hard in their fields, but the youngest spent his time playing with traps.

One day the six brothers said to one another, 'We all do the work, and this *mailotia* does nothing but lives on us. Let us therefore kill him.' So saying, they dug a very deep pit at one side of their field.

That night they said to the youngest boy, 'Tomorrow you are to bring our pej to the field; if you don't we'll beat you.' Next day, before the boy arrived, the eldest brother threw his axe into the pit. When the boy came with the pej, his eldest brother said to him, 'Brother, my axe has fallen into the pit; do go and bring it out for me.'

When the boy went down into the pit, the brothers threw earth and stones on top of him and buried him. Then they went home weeping loudly.

Now in that pit was a karandia rat: it had burrowed a great hole from the bottom out into the jungle above. Through this the boy escaped and set out for home.

When he arrived home, he found his brothers arranging his death ceremonies. When they saw him, they were afraid, and the boy told everyone there what had happened, saying, 'I will never live with them again.'

So saying he went to the jungle and made himself a house out of cowdung. Soon Mahapurub sent a young fisher-girl to him; he married her and they lived together in their house of dung.

4

THE IRON CART

A God-dhuka Lohar story from Raipur District

A Raja had five sons, but he loved the youngest best. The four elder brothers, seeing that the little boy always got the best things, decided to take him to the jungle and kill him. One day they said, 'Let us go and hunt sambhar in the forest.' But the Raja said, 'If you go, you must not take your little brother with you.' The brothers answered, 'We will keep him in the middle of us and he will be perfectly safe.' But when they returned from hunting they left the boy in the jungle and told the Raja that he had been killed by a tiger.

The boy went on and on and on to Madhuban. Surigai was living there under a mango tree. The boy stayed with her and used to clear away her dung. He did this for many days. One day the cow said, 'Why are you so thin?' and she and her sisters gave him their milk and he grew fat.

One day an old man came with a bullock-cart and loaded the cowdung into it, but when he wanted to start it was so heavy that it would not move. The old man asked the boy to drive the cart for him and when he beat the bullocks they went quickly. The old man jumped onto the cart and drove away quickly hoping to carry off the boy and marry him to his daughter. The boy was frightened and screamed for help and the cows chased him and brought him back safely.

The old man went home and this time he made an iron cart and iron bullocks and again returned to the mango tree and loaded his cart with the cowdung. Now Surigai had given the boy a flute of joy and a flute of sorrow, telling him that whenever he was in trouble he should play the flute of sorrow. Once more the old man tried to carry off the boy but he played the flute of sorrow and the cows came to rescue him. But this time, when they tried to break the cart they broke their heads against the iron and died. So the old man took the boy home to marry him to his daughter. But the boy said, 'My parents have died and I have taken a vow not to marry for twelve years.' The old man was very angry, but he kept him in the house and made him work. The boy stayed

for a few days and then ran away to the jungle where Amar Guru was living. The boy served Amar Guru for twelve years and at the end of that time the Guru said, 'Ask for any reward and I will give it to you.' The boy said, 'I don't want anything except some of your holy water.' The Guru gave him the water and the boy carried it to the place where the bones of the cows still lay scattered on the ground. He sprinkled them with the water and life returned to them and they got up and came to him, and he lived with them for many days.

Then one day when the boy was out in the forest gathering mangoes, a Raja came in a motor with his Brahmin and his barber. The boy was up in a tree eating fruit. The Raja lay down under the tree to rest. Presently the boy began to think of his mother and he wept and his tears fell on the Brahmin. When they looked up and saw the boy, they thought they would take him as husband for the Raja's youngest daughter. The Raja said, 'Give us four or five mangoes.' The boy said, 'No'. 'Don't be afraid. We will give you money.' Do bring us down four or five mangoes.' At last they persuaded him to come down. The Raja held out his hand with his money but the boy refused to take it until they said, 'Take what the Raja Saheb is giving you.' But when he put out his hand for the money they caught it and dragged him to the motor and took him to the Palace. In the struggle the boy dropped his flutes and so he was not able to call for his friends, the cows, to help him, but when he saw the Raja's youngest daughter and after they were married he was very happy and he forgot the cows.

5

MOTILAL AND THE PEARLS

A God-dhuka Lohar story from Raipur District

A Raja had four sons. One day while they were playing by the roadside the Mantri came by and asked them by whose favour they got their food. The three eldest said it was by their own favour, but the youngest said it was by his father's. The Mantri went to the Raja and told him what the boys had said; but when the Raja asked them about it the youngest boy said, 'The Mantri

has deceived you; it was my three brothers who said they ate by your favour, it was only I who said it was by my own.'

Hearing this, the Raja was very angry and ordered that his youngest son should be sent into banishment. But the Mantri said, 'You must first marry him and then let him go away.' The Raja sent out his servants to find a mad and ugly girl to marry to his son.

There was a Chamar girl sitting on the road playing with mud. She was a girl who wanted everything she saw, but if anyone gave it to her she would throw it away. The servants thought she would make a good wife for the boy and they went to her father and giving him fifty rupees took the girl to the Palace. The Raja called three or four poor men and married his youngest son to the Chamar girl in front of them. He mounted the boy on a black horse and the girl on a white one and sent them out of his kingdom.

They rode on together till at last they reached a great city. Outside the walls they built a little hut of grass. The boy went to a potter for pots but the potter said, 'I have no pots, but here are two broken pieces which you can have if you like.' The boy took them home and gave them to his wife, saying, 'Bring water in this and cook in that, but you are not to go out of the house.' 'Then who will get the food?' she said. 'I will see to that', answered the boy.

The Raja of that city came riding by followed by twelve soldiers. He saw a deer and chased it. The boy also jumped on his horse and followed; the Raja and the boy rode so fast that the soldiers fell behind and were lost. But the Raja and the boy galloped on till they reached the Kajliban Pahar where the Raja killed the deer and looked round for his soldiers to carry it home. But there was no one there but the boy. The Raja said, 'I am very thirsty.' Now the boy had two laddu-sweets, one for thirst and one for hunger, and he offered the sweet for thirst to the Raja. The Raja said, 'If I eat it I will get more thirsty.' But he took it and when he ate it he lost his thirst. Then he said, 'I am very hungry', and the boy gave him the other sweet and the Raja lost his hunger also.

Then the Raja said, 'Who will carry the deer home?' The boy said, 'I will see to that', and put the body of the deer on his horse and rode along behind the Raja. The Raja said in his mind, 'My

twelve servants do nothing, but this boy does everything,' and he asked the boy if he would become his servant. The boy agreed and, when the Raja asked him what pay he wanted, said, 'My name is Motilal. For pay I want one pearl every day.' So Motilal went to live in the Raja's Palace and when he had earned enough pearls to make a necklace he took it to the Bania and arranged that food should be sent every day to his wife. The Bania kept the pearls and sent food daily. One day the Raja's servant took a pearl by mistake to the boy's wife, but she threw it away saying, 'How can I eat this?'

A thief picked up the pearl outside the house and told his friends that there must be great treasure hidden there. So one night four thieves went to the house but they could find nothing except the two broken pots. They dug up the ground everywhere but still they could find nothing. Then they went to the Bania's house. Now that Bania used to keep his accounts very carefully. That day he had forgotten to write down one pice that he gave to a Sadhu and when the thieves arrived they found him searching everywhere for it. He beat his wife till she fainted. Seeing this, the thieves said to one another, 'If he beats his wife for one pice, what will he not do if we steal the pearls?'

The next night the thieves carried off the Bania's wife and put her in Motilal's hut and they took the mad girl to the Bania's house. When the Bania saw the mad girl, he cried, 'O my poor wife, it is all my fault! I have driven her mad with my beating.' He bathed her in warm water and found lice in her hair. He promised never to beat her again.

Now the Bania's wife sat in the little hut and wept bitterly. Then she wrote a letter in the name of Motilal to her own husband saying, 'Send me my share of the pearls.' The Bania sent them and she sold them and built a big house with the money. When the Raja's servants came there she said to them, 'How many husbands has your Rani?' They said, 'She has one husband, of course.' But she said, 'No, she has two.' When the servants told the Rani that Motilal's wife had said this, she was very angry and ordered that Motilal should be sent home. When he saw the big house in the place where once there had been his little hut, he was frightened, and when the Bania's wife came out and caught

him by the hand he was more frightened still. But she said, 'Let us give a great feast and we will ask everybody to it.'

When the feast began the Bania stood up and cried, 'There is my wife.' But the people said, 'If she is your wife why isn't she living in your house?' She also said, 'I am not his wife, I belong to Motilal.' They went to the Raja, but the Raja said to the Bania, 'By your meanness you have driven away your wife and you have got this mad woman in her place. It is your fate, I can do nothing.'

6

THE PALACE BY THE STREAM

A Baiga story from Pandpur, Mandla District

Five Baiga lived together in a certain village. They were very poor and earned just enough to eat by selling wood. When the five brothers went out one day to sell their wood they came to a stream by the roadside. They were weary and putting down their loads rested and drank the water. As they rested the brothers began to boast. One cried, 'I'll make a Palace over there', and another said, 'No, my bungalow will be over there'. At last the youngest brother said, 'My Palace will be here in the middle, with a house for horses over there, and a house for my elephants over here, and my servants will live there—'. But the others got angry at this and stopped him, abusing him, 'How can a starving creature like you build a Palace?'

On their way home, after selling their wood, the eldest brother exclaimed, 'I feel very thirsty, let's go and drink at the well,' and he led the way to a well by the road. There the eldest brother sat down saying, 'I'm too tired to draw out the water.' The others said the same, so they told the youngest boy to get them water. But as he was drawing it out, the others threw him in.

The next morning a barber went very early while it was still dark to the well, and heard the boy crying inside. He ran to the well to see what was the matter, and let down the bucket. The boy climbed up by the rope. The barber took the boy to the Raja's Palace and left him there.

When the Raja got up he saw the body of the boy lying before

his house and called his doctors and restored him. When the boy was quite well, the Raja made him one of his chaprasis. As the days went by the boy became great friends with the barber who had saved his life. One day the barber said, 'Leave this chaprasi's^{पग} work; you have a little money now; buy a horse and begin to trade.'

The boy followed the barber's advice. One day he was going with his friend to a certain village, when on the way they came to a city. That city was entirely deserted. All the inhabitants had been devoured by a Dano. But great wealth was left and this was being guarded by the Dano's son.

The Baiga boy and the barber wandered through the city and saw nothing but money everywhere. The boy loaded his horse with gold and made a load for himself to carry also. Then he quickly ran away from the city. But the barber waited to choose the best things, and while he was delaying, the Dano came upon him and devoured him.

But the boy went to the stream and had a fine house built. His elder brothers came asking him to give them work and wages.

7

THE STORY OF GUNJHIRA

A Gond story from Patangarh, Mandla District

In a great tree lived Gunjhi the Pigeon. She laid five score and six eggs, and of these two were a cubit long. When she saw the big eggs, she was frightened. 'These are enemies to my own life. Are they Dantar or Dano?' So thinking, she broke the hundred and four eggs, but not the two. 'I must run away with my children and my own life, or the Dano will kill me.' Leaving the big eggs in the nest, she ran away with the five score and four chicks. On the way she met a jackal which was eating bhoir fruit by a stream. He heard the birds, and called to them, 'Who are you that dare fly over my kingdom? I am the Vazir here.'

'This is good news,' said the bird. 'For the Diwan of this kingdom is my brother and I am going to see him.' The jackal said, 'How can you call yourself my sister? How can she live in the flying kingdom?' But she forced him to accept her. He asked her where she was going, and she told him her story.

'O sister, to run away from your eggs is a great sin. Return and break them, and do not be afraid. They are your own life and soul.' So the bird flew back to the tree and went round it five times and said to her children, 'Be my help.' She made a chick sit on every twig and leaf around her to protect her. In a few days life fell into the eggs and they began to wriggle inside. When she broke them, out came two young princes; one was Gunjhmara and the other Gunjhira.

Then the bird began to think, 'What should I feed them on?' and began to weep and with her all the children. At this time Mahadeo and Parvati had come to cut wood. Hearing the weeping, Parvati wept also and made Mahadeo go with her to see what had happened. 'See, sister, I have a hundred and four chicks, and for them I can get kodon and worms. But how can I feed these princes?' Mahadeo gave medicine to Parvati, and at once there was milk in her breast like a stream. She came every day to feed them and returned home.

One day Gunjhi said to Parvati, 'Sister, teach them also.' Parvati put some ornaments on them and asked them what they would learn. 'How to shoot,' said the boys. Gunjhi at once called the twelve Agaria brothers and the thirteen Lohar brothers, and they made them bows and arrows. The boys soon learnt and went out to hunt. One day Parvati saw how free and independent they had become and she said, 'Sons, go out and make your living.' Gunjhi was pleased at this, and the boys said, 'Mother, we are going away; if ever you need our help, take our names and we will be at your service that very moment.' Gunjhi said, 'Go, sons, do not forget your mother.' They touched her feet and left her.

That evening they reached Surjalpur, where they had to rest. At the water-place they asked the water-girls, 'Girls, will we find a place to sleep in the village?' The girls said, 'But you are princes, why don't you go to the Palace?' The girls said to each other, 'How handsome they are!'

The elder boy said, 'Why should we go to the Palace? Why not stay among the villagers?' As they were talking about this, they reached the last house in the village, where a widow lived. She made her living by winnowing what was left of the chaff from the threshing-floors of the rest of the village. When she saw the boys and they asked her to let them stay with her, she was angry.

'Go to the Raja,' she cried. 'There's nothing here but twelve pots of chaff. And every night a great bod fish comes and carries off some human being from the village.'

'Don't be angry, grannie,' said the elder boy, and gave her a gold mohur. She was then pleased enough and cooked food, and spread straw for them to sleep on. As they lay down, she sat by them and began to tell them about the fish. The elder boy was very tired and went to sleep at once, but the younger heard the whole tale and could not sleep for fear and anger.

At midnight he got up and hid by a great tree near the lake where the fish lived. When it came out, the boy shouted at it and fired his arrow and killed it. He cut off its ears, its fins, its tail, and a bit of the liver, and went back to sleep.

In that village it was the Kotwar's duty to get up early in the morning and find out who had been devoured during the night. That morning he wanted to relieve himself; he went to the banks of the lake, and when he was eased, he walked round a little and suddenly saw the great body of the fish. He fainted with fear. 'Why has it not gone back to the lake? Perhaps it has eaten too much.' He threw a stone at it, then he coughed, but the fish took no notice. 'It must be dead,' thought the Kotwar, and began to shout and leap in the air, crying out that he had killed the fish.

Now the Raja had long ago proclaimed that whoever killed the bod fish would get his daughter in marriage, a rent-free village, an elephant, a horse, and living expenses for life. The Kotwar ran home and brought out his broken axe with a burnt handle and sharpened it on a stone. Then he began to chop up the fish. But he could hardly cut it with his old axe. *Kach kach kach* went the axe, but little happened. He shouted 'Come and help, all of you.' The people gathered and were excited at the sight. There was the great fish, and the Kotwar covered with sweat. 'Look at that,' they said to each other. 'The Kotwar has killed it. Look how heavily he's breathing.' And the Kotwar cried, 'Here is a broken axe and a burnt-down handle. Yet with it I met and conquered my enemy.' He left the body and the people, and went to his wife. 'Do you hear, O?' He was so excited he did not know where or how to live, for he was to get the princess in marriage. The old wife thought, 'Why is he so pleased?' But then he said, 'I am to be the Raja's son-in-law, and if you don't behave properly, I will

turn you out.' But she said, 'All right, then I'll go to my parents', and she began to weep. The Kotwar was very angry and beat her out of his house.

The Kotwar then bathed and got out his best clothes in order to go to the Raja. Meanwhile the Raja had heard what had happened and was displeased. But he had to keep his word and he sent five chaprasis to the Kotwar. When they came to the house and said the Raja was calling him, the Kotwar cried haughtily, 'Go away you rascals, I am tired. It is only with great difficulty that I have saved my own life and the life of the village. Tell the Raja that I am coming with my marriage-party, and he should get everything ready. Run quickly or I'll beat you and have you dismissed.'

The wife was quietly listening, and she followed the chaprasis and said to them, 'Please tell the Raja that the Kotwar has gone mad.' But the Raja had already made arrangements for the marriage. But the Brahmins could not take the omens, for every time they put the rice into the water, the grains separated. The omens clearly showed that the girl was to marry a prince. The Brahmins turned their books up and down, but to no purpose. It was clear that the marriage was not to be with the Kotwar. Yet how could the Raja break his word? Then said one of the wisest of the Brahmins, 'Let us have proof of what the Kotwar has done. Bid him bring the ears, and fins, and tail and a bit of the liver for us to see.'

Still the Kotwar had not come, and the Raja got angry and cried, 'Bring the fellow here in bonds.' Then the police brought him and the Raja said, 'You say you have killed the fish; go and bring its ears, and fins and tail and a bit of the liver.' The Kotwar went to the fish, but he could find no ears or fins or tail or liver. 'How could I think of such things,' he cried, 'during my great ordeal. I was senseless, and perhaps I destroyed these things during the fight.'

Then the old Brahmin said, 'Call the whole village.' The people came. Someone said to the old widow, 'Hadt'n't you some people staying in your house last night?' 'Yes, my grandsons were with me.' 'I never heard of these grandsons before', cried the Kotwar. 'If you had visitors, why didn't you report the matter, for I should have written them in my book.' Then the old widow brought the two boys, and Gunjhira told his story. 'Is this true?' asked the

Raja. 'It is a lie,' cried the Kotwar. But the boy produced the ears, the fins, the tail and a bit of the liver. 'There is the thief,' cried the Kotwar in rage. 'He took them from my fish, after I had killed it.' 'Keep quiet, you fool,' said the Sub-Inspector and kicked the Kotwar hard on his bottom.

While this was going on, the girl was sitting in her attic and praying that she might not be married to the Kotwar. But when she saw Gunjhira, she fell in love with him at once. Now all preparations were being made, but Gunjhira refused. 'She must marry my elder brother,' he said. 'Otherwise, she will be his bhai-bohu and we will no more be able to live together. He will not be able to speak to her or live in the same room, and how can we go about the world together then? But if he marries her, she will be my bhauji, and we all can live together happily.'

The elder brother was bewildered. He could not see what to do. At last he said, 'Let her come blindfold on an elephant and put a garland round the neck of the one she will marry.' The girl too was unhappy at this dispute. She prayed, 'Am I not sinless? I love Gunjhira. Let me put the necklace on his neck.'

She came blindfold on the elephant, and put the garland round Gunjhira's neck as she desired. But the Kotwar shouted, 'Let her do it three times.' For saying this the Kotwar was put in jail for six months, and was sent for twelve years afterwards to kill crows in the Raja's kodon fields. Twice more it was done, and each time the girl put the garland on Gunjhira.

But still Gunjhira refused to marry the princess, and at last she was married to Gunjhmara, and they began to live together. One day, Gunjhmara went out to shoot alone. When he had gone, the bhauji said to Gunjhira, 'Come and eat.' But when they went in, she would not serve him. Instead she said, 'Tell me, who killed the fish? On whom did I put the garland?' And she began to weep, for she loved him. But he would not make love to her, and she grew angry. 'I will kill myself, but I will see that you are killed also.'

She brought curds and smeared them all over her body, and called a lakh of cats to lick her. As they did so, they nearly killed her. In the evening, the elder brother came back and saw his wife in agony. She said, 'Your brother tried to force me, so he has done this to me.' Gunjhmara was very angry and went to

the jungle to hang himself. But the younger brother ran after him and brought him back. He said, 'Let us settle this in the panch.' So it was agreed that a great iron pillar was to be made and heated red-hot. Gunjhira was to embrace it, and if he did not die all would know him innocent.

The twelve Agaria brothers and the thirteen Lohar brothers were called and they made a great iron pillar. The Teli brought twelve cartloads of oil, and the villagers twelve cartloads of wood. They heated the pillar till it was red-hot, and Gunjhira embraced it, and he was not injured. So sure was he of his merit, that he took a Brahmin child and held it too against the pillar, and the child was unhurt.

Then Gunjhira touched the feet of Gunjhmara and of the panch and bade them johan. 'I will go now to the jungle, for I can no longer stay here.' Before he left he said to them, 'Fie upon women and their lies. Fie on a horse that dances. Fie on elephant-children. For these three ever ruin the happiness of men.'

NOTE I

Magic Arrows

In the first story of this Chapter, the hero persuades the divine blacksmiths, the twelve original Lohasur brothers, to make him a great bow and eight magic arrows. These proved to be Aginban, the Arrow of Fire; Kurpaban, the Arrow like a Scythe; Bislaban, the Poison Arrow; Chakkarban, the Whirling Arrow; Butchiban, the Blunt Arrow; Bakkarban, the Arrow that Clears Everything Away; Bindnaban, the Arrow that Bores Holes; and Bilopinban, the Arrow that Utterly Destroys. In Chap. VI, 2, the hero is given Chakkarban, the Arrow of Whirling, which cuts people into little pieces and Chirban, the Arrow which Catches them like Chir Grass. Hirakhan, the hero of Chap. II, 2, had twelve kinds of arrows, but we are not told what they were.

Such arrows are not unknown in India. There is a reference in the *Katha Sarit Sagara* to 'the flowery bow with the arrow of bewilderment, the weapon of wind and the water weapon'.¹ Many different arrows are enumerated in the *Mahabharata*, and even today the Dhanur-veda, or science of bows, is preserved in the Hindu Gurukula. In a story from Ceylon, there is a magic bow 'made from the rice-pestle and an arrow made from love-grass' with which the hero kills a sambhar.² In a Baiga charm used before hunting,

¹ Penzer, i, 184.

² Parker, iii, 65.

there is a reference to Saktiban, the Arrow of Power; Aginban, the Arrow of Fire; Chirriban, the Thin Arrow; Bittaban, the Blunt Arrow; Andriban, the Arrow that Kills in the Dark; Chakkarban, the Arrow that Goes like a Wheel and Sabdavediban, the Arrow that Kills by its Sound.¹

In Chap. II, 3, Hirakhan Kshattri is killed by a Binjhwar with Jahura-Mahura arrows. This is probably a reference to Jahar Mohura, a name given to small tablets sold by snake-charmers, supposed to contain snake poison and to be an antidote to snake-bite.

There are many stories about arrows. Shaik Chilli has a tale of a man who shot an arrow at a star; fourteen years later it fell back to earth as a burning meteor.² At Sarkuhiya in the Basti District is a well where Buddha struck the ground with his arrow and thus caused a spring to flow.³ The arrow is often compared to a snake, for like the snake it has poison in its tongue. Both are phallic symbols. The bow and arrow of Arjuna are two formidable Naga, keepers of the water of life, on Mount Mandara.⁴ In a Baiga story the hero's Life-Index is kept in his arrow and when the arrow is burnt he himself dies.⁵

Many tribes use the arrow ceremonially. The Muria and Maria cut a child's umbilical cord with an arrow and then drive it into the ground above the pit in which the placenta is buried. The arrow remains in position for a month until the mother's period of impurity is ended. It is then kept in the house, and after some years shown to the child and sometimes given to him. Muria and Maria make an altar of arrows and worship them before going out to hunt. At a Muria marriage an arrow is placed between the bridegroom's hands, at a Baiga marriage upon his head; and oil is poured down it.

The Binjhwar tribe regard the arrow as their special symbol; they brand their cattle with it; if illiterate, they use it as a signature. If a girl cannot find a husband, she may be married to an arrow. The Binjhwar veneration for the arrow derives from the story of the Bara Bhai Betkar, or Twelve Brother Archers, first ancestors of the Binjhwar, who one day shot their arrows into the sky. The arrows went all the way to Puri and there stuck in the door of the great temple. None could pull them out save the brothers, who were rewarded with the estates their descendants now hold.⁶ Juang women tattoo their foreheads with three lines which represent a bow and arrow.

The magic arrow, especially the Aginban or Arrow of Fire, is connected with the practice of sending invisible objects through the air to injure an enemy; the expression *ban mārma* means to perform magic against someone.

¹ *The Baiga*, 85.

² Crooke, i, 52.

³ Russell and Hiralal, ii, 330.

⁴ Shaik Chilli, 80. Cf. Parker, iii, 49.

⁵ Held, 273.

⁶ *The Baiga*, 491.

NOTE 2

The Rebounding Bow

The incident of the birds eating away the inside of the bow in Story 1 of this Chapter, so that when the crisis comes the bow breaks and its wielder is killed, is a variant on the very ancient motif of the Rebounding Bow. Bloomfield has traced this through the Vedic writings (where Indra assumes the form of an ant and gnaws Rudra's bow-string so that it cuts off his head) and the *Panchatantra*.¹ I know of no example of this motif in the oral literature, and it seems to me probable that the incident in the text has arisen independently.

NOTE 3

Magic Cultivation

Among the aborigines from whom the bulk of these tales has been collected the traditional and still the favoured form of agriculture is that known as axe-cultivation. In central India this takes three forms.

1. Penda or bewar means that trees and undergrowth are cut on the steep slopes of hills. When dry, the wood is fired and seed is sown in the ashes after the first rains have fallen. In a penda clearing there is no digging or ploughing of the earth and after two or three years the plot is abandoned and a new clearing made.

2. Dippa, also called marhan and erka. This differs from penda or bewar in three ways:

(a) The clearings are made on fairly level ground, not on the side of hills.

(b) After the fellings have been fired the ashes are evenly distributed over the whole area. In a bewar clearing, no one bothers to do this. The result is a much more even and regular crop.

(c) When the rains fall, the ashes are ploughed into the ground before the seed is sown.

3. Parka or dahi. In the first two types of clearing the wood is felled in the very spot where it is desired to sow, but in dahi clearings trees and brushwood are cut elsewhere and are carried on to an already existing field. Here they are spread over the ground and fired. After raking the ashes evenly over the field, they are ploughed into the ground and the seed is sown.

In central India it is the Baiga who have professed the greatest attachment to bewar and have refused, in spite of every form of official persuasion, to abandon it. Orthodox Baiga believe that it is a sin to lacerate the breast of their mother, the earth, with the plough. In Bastar the Hill Maria normally practise bewar or penda, and nearly all the other aborigines either dippa or parka.

¹ See Penzer, vii, p. xx.

The Maria and Muria have not the same religious devotion to this form of cultivation as the Baiga, but they too believe that 'the axe is our milk-giving cow', and they remain deeply attached to it. Other tribes in the Central Provinces have had to abandon the practice in consequence of official pressure, but there are few of them who would not revert to it if they were allowed.

This form of cultivation is less tedious than plough-cultivation, but while it is in progress is more arduous. Particularly the task of firing the fellings and distributing the ashes during the hottest month of the year is regarded by the aboriginals as very onerous. Stories in which rapid and immediate results are obtained, therefore, are very attractive to them. Thus the hero who is able, by laying twelve axes in a row and performing an incantation, to cut down a whole forest of trees is a hero indeed. So is the youth who can fire a vast area of fellings with a single coal or who can plough and sow in a single day. The theme is popular in the stories of this book but appears less frequently than we should expect elsewhere, probably because we have few stories from the genuine primitives of central India. In a Birhor tale there is an account of a magic head to which the heroine ties an axe and which moves about the forest cutting down trees for an area of twenty-four square miles. The trees are then fired, ploughed and sown with a single basket of mere husks which miraculously yields a bumper crop of rice. This story goes further than any in our collection since the threshing-floor is miraculously filled with all the rice from the field and is then threshed, winnowed and tied up into bins of its own accord.¹

NOTE 4

The Act of Truth

'An Act of Truth', says Burlingame,² 'is a formal declaration of fact, accompanied by a command or resolution or prayer that the purpose of the agent shall be accomplished. For example, a hunter asks a sage how a certain nymph can be captured, and the sage replies: "Nymphs can be captured by the utterance of a truth; nor, under such circumstances, have they power to vanish from sight." Accordingly the hunter says to the nymph he desires to capture: "You are the beautiful daughter of King Druma; if this be true, halt! you are bound fast! If it be true that you are the daughter of King Druma and that you were reared by the King, move not a foot, O fair Manohara!" By the utterance of this truth on the part of the hunter the nymph addressed is immediately bound fast, and is unable to vanish from sight; but all her companions vanish

¹ Roy, *The Bihors*, 440.

² W. Burlingame, 'The Act of Truth', *J.R.A.S.*, July 1917, 429 ff. See also A. Venkatasubbiah, 'Vedic Studies; The Act of Truth in the Rigveda', *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, xiv (1940), 133 ff.

into the air. A single truth is sufficient; and a truth of the most commonplace sort. As a rule the Act of Truth refers to some such fact as that the agent, or the person on whose behalf the Act is performed, possesses certain good qualities or is free from certain evil qualities; that he has done certain things he ought not to do. In connexion with the Power of Truth are sometimes mentioned Powers of Righteousness, such as the power of goodness and the power of merit; and as well the superhuman might of spirits, deities and Buddhas. Such mention does not mean, however, that the Act of Truth in any way depends for its efficacy upon the co-operation of these other forces, powerful though they are. Truth, in and by itself all-powerful and irresistible, is essentially distinct from them, and operates independently of them. Truth, to the exclusion of any ordinary physical power or cause, is the sole power whereby the conjurer causes rain to fall, fire to turn back, poison to be struck down. There is nothing that cannot be accomplished by the truth. Men, gods, powers of nature, all animate and inanimate things alike obey the truth.¹

The best-known example of the Act of Truth occurs in the *Book of Kings*. 'And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty. "If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty." And there came down fire from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.'² So convenient and useful a motif naturally occurs frequently throughout the whole realm of Indian literature. It is to be found in the *Jataka*, in the *Panchatantra* and the *Katha Sarit Sagara*.³ In the oral literature we find in the Santal story of 'The Charitable Raja', a lost wife who had fallen on evil days and prayed to Thakur that if she were really the wife that had been lost and had been faithful she might be restored to health. Water was poured over her and she was at once cured of her disease.⁴ Again in another Santal story, that of Sahde Goala, a heroine declares, 'If I am really chaste, no one will be able to touch me'.⁵ Again in 'Goala and the Cow' a wife whose husband was changed into a donkey by the curse of a cow restores him to his original form by saying, 'If I have lied, may Chando punish me and if I have spoken the truth may this ass become a man'.⁶ In a Bengali tale, two girls seeking shelter say, 'O Tree, if we are the virtuous daughters of a virtuous mother, be divided in two so that we may come inside.' The tree opens and they pass the night in safety.⁷ In one of Day's stories also, a tree opens to receive a banished maiden and her nurse.⁸

In our collection the motif recurs continually. In Chap. V, 1, for example, the heroine cries to the cotton tree, 'If it be true that you are a good cotton tree, bend down'. It does so and takes her

¹ ² Kings i, 10-12.

³ Bompas, 185.

⁴ M'Culloch, 77.

² See Penzer, ii, 31 ff. and J.B.O.R.S., xii, 578.

⁴ Ibid., 118.

⁷ Day, 125 f.

⁵ Ibid., 266.

up into the air, whence she can survey the scene of her future adventures. In Chap. XVII, 7, a girl similarly makes a tree bend down by saying, 'O tree, are you our tree...?' The tree replies, 'I am yours'. Then the girl says, 'If you are ours, then bend down'. She sits in the branches and says, 'If you are ours, stand up again'. So also in Chapter I, 4, a hero addresses his horse, 'If you are truly the horse of my ancestors, take me to my wife.'

There is one curious example of the apparent failure of this Act of Truth. In Chap. XXVI, 1, a woman gives a friend two pots of rupees for safe keeping. When the time comes to recover them her friend swears that he never received them, and demands that the woman should swear that she had given them. She declares, 'If I have *not* given you the two pots of rupees, let my son die' and immediately the son drops down dead. On the way to the funeral a stranger meets the party and advises the woman to take the body back to her friend's house and swear again, but this time in a different form, avoiding the word 'not'. She does accordingly, saying, 'I made a mistake last time. It was not two pots but four that I gave my friend. If I have given you four pots of rupees, let my son live again'. Immediately the boy comes back to life, and the friend has to return four pots of rupees instead of two. Here it seems as though the essence of the declaration is its positive form; whether it happens to be a true declaration or not is of minor importance. A story from Mirzapur follows the same lines, though here it is a banker who has been reduced to beggary save for one ruby which he entrusts to a friend. The stranger who advises a course of lying is interpreted as the Incarnation of this Iron Age, when profit is only to be had by falsehood.¹

The technical value of the Act of Truth is obvious. Transport is the perennial problem of the story-teller. The Act of Truth is another means, like the motifs of 'Looking for Water' or 'The Pregnancy Craving' to get people on the move. The Act of Truth is always up the hero's—and the narrator's—sleeve, and when all other means of escape have failed, when the plot has come to a hopelessly dead end, he can get out of the dilemma by employing it.

NOTE 5

The Magic Sweets

With the magic sweets in Story 5, one for thirst and one for hunger, we may compare the incident in a Ho tale, where a Raja gives his son whom he is banishing two loaves of bread, 'one to excite and the other to appease hunger'.² But unfortunately the story-teller completely forgets about the loaves; they seem to have been a mere ornament to the story, and do not advance the plot as the magic sweets in our text do.

¹ *North Indian Notes and Queries*, v, 83.

² See *J.B.O.R.S.*, ii, 291.

THE JEALOUS QUEENS

THE stories of the Jealous Queens, which are a variant of the widely distributed 'Rhea Sylvia' motif, are possibly intended to teach the dangers and distresses of polygamy. It is indeed for this reason that the distribution of the tale appears to be confined to the East. 'So far as I know', says Macculloch, 'there are no direct equivalents in Europe, perhaps for the reason that polygamy has so long been offensive to Western minds.'¹

The main outline of the stories in this Chapter with their many parallels in Indian folk-tales is as follows:

A polygamous Raja contracts a supernumerary and generally unusual marriage.

He treats his new wife with special consideration and when she becomes pregnant gives her a bell or drum so that she can call him when her crisis comes upon her.

At the young wife's confinement the husband is absent and the jealous co-wives substitute inanimate objects or animals for the child or children who are born.

The co-wives dispose of the child or children in a way that is expected to lead to their death.

The Raja returns and, finding only a stone or animal as his young wife's child, banishes her.

In some cases the children survive; in others after surviving for a short time they are killed as a result of the intrigues of the jealous wives.

Where the children survive they pass through a number of ordeals generally necessitated by the attempts of the jealous wives to kill them.

Where the children die they turn into flowers or trees.

The child or children are recognized by the Raja, the recognition scene being accomplished in several different ways.

Mother and children are then reinstated and the wicked wives destroyed.

Although the first two stories in this Chapter do not follow this pattern in all its detail, they clearly belong to the same sequence. Let us then take the above incidents one by one, for it

¹ Macculloch, 141.

is remarkable how great a variety there is within the framework of a single motif.

1. A polygamous but infertile Raja contracts a new marriage of an unusual kind. In Story 2 of our collection he brings a Rakshasa's daughter to his house. In Story 3 he marries a beggar-girl with the special hope of getting a child from her. In Story 4 he finds a young and beautiful Gond girl. In Story 5 he marries the Queen of the Forest; in Story 6 also a fairy princess. There are two other stories of this type in our collection, one in Chap. XVII, 7, where the Raja marries the beautiful sister of the little girl who is drowned in the tank, and in Chap. IV, 8, where the Raja does not marry any new girl but is specially devoted to his youngest wife. In the parallel stories¹ Frere's Raja marries the daughter of his gardener, Day's Raja becomes dotingly fond of a Rakshasin. In the Ho and the Birhor tales the Raja finding all his wives barren gives them mangoes to eat, whereupon only the youngest of his queens conceives.

2. When the young queen has been found pregnant, the Raja, who is usually represented as very enthusiastic for hunting, a pastime which frequently takes him for long periods away from the Palace, leaves with his young wife a means of recalling him at the time of her confinement. In Story 3 the Raja gives her two flutes, one for sorrow, one for joy. In Stories 4 and 5 he gives her a bell; in Story 6 a whistle. The Birhor Raja gives a drum; Frere's Raja a golden bell. The girl, anxious to test her husband's love, rings the bell or beats the drum once or twice when there is nothing wrong with her. The Raja hurries home from his hunting and finding nothing the matter is angry and resolves to take no notice of the message in future. This prepares the way for the tragedy of the confinement.

3. At the birth of the child or children the elder wives, secure in the fact that their husband will not now be returning, substitute some inanimate object or animal for the real child. In Story 3 they put a grindstone in the place of the nine score sons and one daughter. In Story 4 they put a grindstone instead of the girl and boy, in Story 5 they put a stone ↗

¹ The parallel stories are these: Frere, 40 ff.; Day, 117 ff.; Grignard, 106 f.; the Ho tales in *J.B.O.R.S.*, ii, 293 ff, and Bompas, 473 f.; Roy, *The Birhors*, 468 ff. There is an interesting variant, where jealous sisters-in-law take the place of queens, in A. K. Mitra's account of 'Ponkavati, or the Girl who came to Life', *Man in India*, xxi, 46 ff.

instead of the girl's beautiful son, in Story 6 they put a kitten. So also in the Birhor tales the jealous wives put a broom and a bit of firewood, instead of the son and daughter that are born. In Frere's tale they put one hundred and one stones instead of the one hundred boys and one girl. In the Ho tales they put a bit of wood.

In a few tales, however, there is a variant. In No 2 of our collection it is the Rakshasin wife who is jealous, not her six elders, and she has them turned out of the Palace and blinded. The youngest of the original wives gives birth to a son whom the Rakshasin then tries to destroy. The same theme occurs in Day's version of the tale where the Rakshasin, who appears to be little more than a concubine, drives out the seven real wives and makes them blind. In this version it is the eldest wife who first gives birth to a child and they all kill and eat it except the youngest wife who hides her share. Then the second wife gives birth to a child and again the youngest wife hides her portion. And so with them all. At last the youngest wife has a son, but she refuses to give him for food. When the other wives demand their share, she gives them the portions of the other children which she had saved. All seven mothers now suckle the child and it becomes after some years the hardiest and strongest boy that ever lived. In Chap. IV, 8, the youngest wife actually does give birth to a hare. There is no idea here of substitution. The girl has eaten a mango which had been covered with the spittle of a hare with this fatal result. In the Ho story from the Kolhan the youngest Rani's son has the body of a boy but a face like a mongoose.

4. The Raja now returns home and finding, as he supposes, that his wife has given birth to a monstrosity and presumably all the time being rather suspicious of the unusual circumstances of her confinement, has her banished from the Palace. But the jealous wives are not content with this. Their ultimate safety depends upon the utter destruction of the children born to the banished wife. In Story 3 the one hundred and one babies are thrown into the buffalo-shed in the hope that the cattle will destroy them. The buffaloes, however, care for the children and the wives then throw them into a well. In Story 4 the wives put the children into a box and throw them into the sea whence they are rescued by a Sadhu. In Story 5 they put the child in the buffalo-shed but find a buffalo suckling it. In Story 6 they put him among the cows

near their hind legs in the hope that he will be kicked to death. In the Ho and the Birhor tales they bury the child in a pit from which the potters dig their earth, but a potter rescues the child and cares for him. In Frere's version they throw the one hundred and one children behind the Palace on a dust-heap close to some large rat-holes but the rats drag them into their holes and save them.

5. It is now that the variations in the story become more manifest. The banished child grows up and presently persuades his foster-father to give him a wooden horse which he takes to drink at the place where the wicked queens are bathing. They, discovering that the child is alive, attempt to kill him and thus prolong the story by subjecting him to various ordeals and adventures. In Story 2, as well as in Day's version where the hero is the son of one of the blinded queens, the Rakshasin drives him out and subjects him to ordeals. In only one of our stories, Chap. XVII, 7, the jealous queens succeed in killing the child. This incident, however, is much more common in the variants. It happens in the Ho and Birhor stories as well as in Frere's tale. This means, of course, that there is no question of the hero enjoying further adventures or passing through ordeals. His body turns into a flower. In Frere's tale the one hundred and one children turn into a hundred mango trees in the centre of which is a little rose bush. In the Ho tale there is a bamboo and a bush with sweet and beautiful flowers. In the Birhor tale, a plantain grows from the body of the boy and a flower from that of the girl.

6. We have now reached the point where recognition becomes inevitable. In the tales where the child or children have managed to survive, this takes various forms. In Story 1 there is a dramatic incident where the hero, who has created twenty-one children himself by smearing pots with his urine, tells the story to his father who believes him. In Story 2 the truth is revealed to the Raja in a dream. In Stories 3, 5 and 6 the hero insists on his banished mother being called home. A screen is tied between mother and son. The mother's milk spurts from her breast and passes through the screen into her son's mouth. Seeing this, the Raja is naturally convinced. In Story 4, the recognition is achieved by a simple explanation. This is also the method of Day's version, though the hero supports his story by dramatically killing a monstrous bird that was destroying the city. In the other tales where the

dead children have turned into flowers or trees recognition comes when, as in the Ho story, nobody can pluck the flowers except the Raja himself. He cuts down the bamboo and out of it steps his son who reveals all that has happened. In another Ho story, where the murdered child has turned into a lotus flower, not even the Raja can pick it and he has to send for his banished youngest queen to do so. When she comes near to the lotus the milk from her breasts begins to fall in jets on the flower which advances to meet her and at her touch is transformed into a lovely child. In the Birhor tale when the Raja's servants attempt to cut the pretty flower into which the dead girl has passed, it lifts itself up into mid-air; the Raja comes to pick it but fails, and then calls all his other queens and they too fail. But when the banished queen is summoned she holds out her cloth for the flower to drop into it and flower and plantain tree sing joyfully to each other and are suddenly transformed back into a boy and girl.

7. It is unfortunate that we are unable to conclude with these pretty incidents, particularly in view of the fact that in most of the tales vice and cruelty remain unpunished. But in all these stories summary vengeance is inflicted upon the wicked wives. The Rakshasin Rani is buried alive in a pit. In Story 3 some are hanged, others nailed to a tree and others buried alive. In Story 4 the wicked queens are buried alive in the middle of a road and wood is placed above them and a lighted lamp. In Story 5 the six queens are only banished from the court, but in Story 6 they are beheaded and their graves are trampled on. So too in the variants. The Ho tale has the wicked wives pushed into a well and drowned; the other Ho tale has them buried alive in a pit. In Day's story the wicked Rakshi has already been killed before the recognition for the hero gets hold of the bird in which her Life-Index is contained and tearing it to pieces destroys the queen. In the Birhor tale six wells are made and the queens pushed into them, while in Frere's version the twelve wicked old Ranis are burnt to death.

These variants of a famous and popular story show the large degree of detailed variation that occurs as a story passes from lip to lip among the people.

I

THE RAJA OF KAKARPUR

A Pando story from Korba Zamindari

Long ago there was a city called Kakarpur, whose Raja had six wives but not a single child. This Raja could not eat his food without flesh from the forest; so he had to go out hunting daily. One day he went so far that he came to the Atakban Forest, whence it was impossible for any traveller to return, and the Katakban Forest, whence—if anyone tried to escape—an unseen sword cut off his head.

Presently he came to a great tank, full of clear water, and in the shade of some bushes on the bank he lay down to rest. Soon there came the princess if Mahuapurgarh with her six companions to bathe. On the bank there were seven flat stones on which the girls used to sit. Beyond the tank, among the trees were seven swings and a raised platform on which they put their clothes.

The girls played on the swings for a time, and then sat down on the platform and began to talk. The princess asked each of her friends what was written in their fate. The first girl said that she would be unhappy, for soon after her marriage her husband would die and make her a widow. The second said that she would have a happy marriage and many children, but there would never be enough food to eat in the house. The third said that she was going to marry a wealthy man and would be very happy with many children. The fourth said she would be happy enough, but would only give birth to sons, and it would be costly to marry them. The fifth said she would have a good home, but would always be unhappy as every one of her children would die. The sixth said she was doomed to die immediately she married.

Then the six friends asked the princess to tell them her fate. 'No, it is nothing,' she said. But they pressed her and at last she said that she was fated to be the seventh wife of a man and that she would bear a son who would shine as brightly as the rays of the sun.

Then the girls went to bathe. To their surprise they found that there were eight stones instead of seven. They bent over the bank and looked into the water—and there, instead of seven

reflections, there were eight. Now they grew frightened and tried to run away. But the Raja came out from his hiding-place and caught hold of the princess. She cried and struggled, but he took her on his horse and away through the forest. By her magic the Atakban and Katakban forests had no power over them and they were able to escape and return home.

When the Raja married the princess the six other wives were very angry, and when the girl gave birth to a lovely son whose skin shone as the light, they could not bear it. Each went and lay with her face to the wall and refused to speak. The Raja was distracted, and promised to do anything they asked if only they would get up. 'Turn that girl out of the Palace and send her son with her. She is a witch.'

The Raja had promised, and had to do what he had said. Full of sadness, he drove out his beautiful wife and she went into the jungle taking her son with her. As he grew up, he used to go out playing, and one day he found a pond and after that used to go every day to dig there.

A herd of pigs was wallowing in the mud. One of the sows saw the boy and was so pleased with his beauty that she swallowed him and put him in her belly. The sow ran away home to the jungle and brought the boy out of her mouth and asked him, 'Why were you playing with the mud?' He said, 'My mother is the youngest of seven wives and the other wives were jealous of her and drove her out of the Palace, so I ran away crying to play in the pond.' The sow said to the boy, 'Don't cry, I will look after you as if I were your mother' and she took the boy to her owner who was a Basor. He was very pleased and gave the boy many things to eat. The sow said to the boy, 'Every day go out to play for an hour or two, but for the rest of the time hide inside my belly, or your enemies may kill you.'

The Basor made a wooden horse for the child on which he used to ride here and there. One day he took the horse to the pond; there he found the six Ranis who had driven away his mother. He asked them to give some water for his horse to drink, but they were angry and sent him away. One of them said, 'That boy is the son of the youngest Rani. We must kill him.' They found out where the boy was living and the eldest Rani, pretending to have a headache, went to lie down in a little hut in the garden

and refused to take any food. When the Raja came to her, she said, 'Bring me the liver of the sow in the Basor's house and that will cure me.'

Now the sow heard what was going to happen and went to a bitch in a neighbour's house. 'O neighbour, keep this child, for today I am to die.' So the bitch took the child into her belly. Then came the Raja's soldiers and killed the sow and took the liver to put on the Rani's forehead.

Some days later the boy again took his wooden horse to the pond and now the Ranis heard about the bitch and gave orders to kill her. But the bitch went quickly to the Raja's mare and said, 'O mare, this is your master. Look after him, for today I am to die.' So the mare took the child into her belly.

When the Rani tried to kill the mare the Raja refused, for he said it was a gift from the gods. Then all the Ranis threatened to take poison and kill themselves and thus forced the Raja to give orders for the death of the mare. But the mare said, 'First of all, let me dance before you; then you may kill me.' The Raja made a great circle with his soldiers and he himself stood on one side. The mare danced before them and then suddenly broke the circle at the place where the Raja was standing and galloped away into the jungle. There she let the boy out of her belly and put him on her back.

Now that boy went to Bhuiharra and found six horses eating laddu-sweets. The boy sat down with them and ate a lot also. The mare said to him, 'Now go into the city and get some work. When you have grown up, you may come back to me.' So the boy went to the house of a potter and learnt the potter's trade.

The Raja of that city had a daughter and she had twenty companions with her. On the Ekti festival the twenty-one girls came to the potter's house for red pots, for on that day they were to marry their dolls to one another. The boy said, 'I am sorry, the new pots are not yet ready; but we will put red colour on ordinary pots. Bring me some water and we will paint them red.' But the girls would not go for water, so the boy made some paint with red earth mixed with his urine and in this way he coloured the pots.

Now the girls took the pots home and fetched water in them, but when they had drunk the water they became pregnant and in due time were delivered of twenty-one sons. There was great

excitement in the city, for no one could say who was the father of these children. The Raja gave a great feast. He called all the men in the city and ordered them to cook, saying, 'When the babies run for their food, they will go each to its own father and then we will know to whom we are to marry these girls.' Now all the men of the city were there except the boy from the potter's house. But when the food was ready the babies refused to go to anyone but sat quietly in their mothers' laps.

At last they called the boy from the potter's house. On his plate there were twenty-one portions of food and when he brought it, the children came running to him and he fed them. The Raja was very angry and threatened to kill him but when he heard the whole story he was pleased, and gave him all twenty-one girls as his wives and half his kingdom. Then the boy called the mare who had saved his life and they lived happily together.

2

THE DISINHERITED SON

A Gond story from Karanjia, Mandla District

A Raja had six wives. One day he went with his servants to hunt in the jungle, and became very thirsty. He told his servants to climb a tree and look for water. But when they looked they could see nothing but thick jungle. At last one of them saw in the midst of the jungle a Palace with a spire on the roof, glistening in the sun. In that Palace lived Natiyamal Dano.

The whole party hastened to the Palace. The Dano had gone away somewhere, but his daughter received them. She had stretched a thread of kosa silk from there to the sea,¹ and the water used to flow along it. It was her custom to say to visitors, 'If you can drink up all the water at the end of this thread, you will win; but if you can't, I win', and then she used to tie them up and keep them for her father's supper. So when the Raja came and said, 'I am very thirsty; give me some water to drink,' she replied, 'Here is water flowing from this thread. If you can drink it, you will win, but if not I will win and you will be in my power.' The

¹ The Gond have no knowledge, of course, that the sea is salt.

Raja said, 'Why, that won't be enough water for us.' But he made his servants drink first. One tried to drink up the water and failed, so did a second and failed, then a third and failed. At that the Raja began to reflect.

Now the Raja had a one-eyed barber with him, and this barber looked out of the Palace window and saw the thread of silk stretching away to the sea. He went quietly outside and broke the thread. Then the Raja drank and at once the water was finished. So the Raja had conquered the Dano's daughter. At that moment Natiyamal Dano came home roaring, 'I smell the smell of human flesh; give me my supper.' But his daughter said, 'No you can't eat them today. This Raja has vanquished me, and I am to be his bride.'

The Raja made a half-minute marriage booth and a one-minute wedding with the Dano's daughter, and they all went home. As they approached the Palace, the girl asked, 'How many wives have you already?' 'Six,' answered the Raja, a little shyly. The girl said, 'Turn those six women out and I'll come to your house.' The Raja ordered the six queens to come out in torn and dirty garments. But the sixth, the youngest, the prettiest, was pregnant. They went to live in one of the royal gardens, and the new Rani entered her Palace.

After a few days the new Rani said to her husband, 'Bring me the eyes of those six queens; then I can live happily, otherwise I shall die.' The Raja sent orders to his servants to take out the eyes of the queens and bring them to him. The eyes were put before them and after that the Raja and his new Rani lived together in great pleasure.

But in the royal garden sat the six blind women. After some days, the youngest wife gave birth to a son. He soon grew strong in the sunlight and tall in the wind. After a time someone told the Rani that a boy had been born to one of the blind women. She grew afraid that the boy would soon grow up and take the kingdom from her, and she considered how best to kill him. She sent for her barber and said, 'Go and tell that boy—

Whoever can in a single day
Sow, reap, thresh and winnow the rice
Proclaims himself the son of the king.'

When the barber told this to the boy, he was very sad. 'How

can anyone do such a thing?' he thought and left his home, wandering into the thick jungle. There he found a Sadhu whose hair had grown twenty-four miles around. The boy thought, 'How can I touch the feet of this holy man? Wherever I go his hair impedes me.' And he spent many days gathering the hair together. Even then when he reached the Sadhu, he found him covered with dirt so that it was not possible to see him. But the boy brought a lot of water and washed him. This took twelve years. When at last the water penetrated to the skin, the Sadhu exclaimed in anger, and said, 'Be off, copulator with your sister, if one of my eyes falls upon you you will be burnt to ashes.' The boy hastily got behind him. Then the Sadhu opened his eyes, and the forest was burnt for twenty-four miles in front of him. Then when the Sadhu had quietened down, he said, 'Who is it? Come and stand before me.' The boy came and fell at the Sadhu's feet, and told him his unhappy story.

Then said the Sadhu: 'I will now turn you into a parrot. Fly over to the fields of Natiyamal Dano. Only there can you get rice which grows in a single day. Sit on a tree and when you see that the Dano's servants have gone to rest, fly down and take an ear of grain in your beak. The servants will chase you but don't look at them or you will be turned into stone.' So it was. The boy became a parrot and carried off an ear of the grain. But when the Dano's servants chased him, the boy did not look back but flew straight to the Sadhu, and the Sadhu turned the parrot back into a boy.

The boy went home and sowed the rice; that very day it sprouted, it grew; the boy reaped it, threshed it, winnowed it. The Rani sent her barber to see if the boy had returned and the boy greeted him saying, 'You have come at the right moment. Take this grain to the Rani and let her eat it.' But when the Rani's barber showed the grain to the Rani she was afraid. But she said, 'Go back to that boy and say—

Whoever can in a single day
Sow, reap, thresh and winnow the rice
And cook and eat the kowa from
The wild white buffaloes
Proclaims himself the son of the king.'

Hearing this, the boy went back to the Sadhu and told him. The Sadhu turned him into a bumble-bee, and sent him to the grazing-grounds of Natiyamal Dano where the wild white buffaloes are. The bumble-bee waited till the Dano's servants had milked the buffaloes, then dropped into one of the buckets and flew up with a loud buzz. The buffaloes chased him and the cowherds chased the buffaloes back to the Sadhu. But the Sadhu turned all the buffaloes into stones and the boy into a fly, and when the Dano's servants arrived he abused them, saying, 'There is nothing here; why do you trouble a Sadhu?'

When they had gone away, the Sadhu turned the stones back into buffaloes and the fly into the Raja's son and the boy took the herd to his house. There he milked them and made kowa and sent it to the Rani. When she saw it she was very frightened and said to her barber, 'Go to the boy and say to him—

Whoever can in a single day
Sow, reap, thresh and winnow the rice
And cook and eat the kowa from
The wild white buffaloes
And mount the great horse Hansraj
Proclaims himself the son of the king.'

Hearing this the boy went to the Sadhu and told him. The Sadhu said, 'Go and I will give you weapons.' He gave him Chakkarban, the Arrow of Whirling, and Chirban that catches men like the chir grass, and a stone, and a gourd of water, and a stick, and sent him to the Palace of Natiyamal Dano to bring the great horse Hansraj from the stables. The boy went to the Palace and told the Dano that he was his own son. The Dano was very pleased at this and received him with great honour. The next day the Dano went out to dig roots for dinner, and the boy wandered through the Palace till he found the great horse Hansraj. He mounted it and rode out of the Palace towards the forest. But the Dano saw him and followed. The boy threw Chakkarban at him and the arrow whirled round and cut him into little pieces. But the Dano came together again and again pursued the boy. Then the boy threw Chirban and the Dano was caught by hands and feet. But he freed himself and again was at the boy's heels. This time the boy threw the water from his gourd and a great river flowed between them.

But the Dano swam across. Then the boy threw his stick and a great jungle at once sprang up. But the Dano broke his way through. Then the boy threw the stone and it turned into a great mountain of rock, and the Dano was unable to climb it.

Now at last the boy reached the Sadhu and told him all that had happened, and returned to his home. When the Rani heard that the boy had come home on Hansraj the great horse, she was frightened, and sent the barber again to the boy saying, 'Tell the boy that

Whoever can in a single day
Sow, reap, thresh and winnow the rice
And cook and eat the kowa from
The wild white buffaloes
And mount the great horse Hansraj
And win Angarmati for his bride
Proclaims himself the son of the king.'

Hearing this, the boy mounted Hansraj his horse and told him to take him to Angarmati the Maiden. The horse flew through the air and in a moment they were at the house of Angarmati the Maiden. But Angarmati was the daughter of a Dano. She was swinging in a golden swing, and her father had gone to cut bamboo-shoots in the jungle for supper. The boy stood before Angarmati. She was shining as fire and the boy fell senseless. But the girl ran to him and sprinkled water over him and so revived him. 'Why have you come here, my enemy?' she cried. 'If my mother sees you she will eat you.' When the mother came home she tried to find the boy, but Angarmati had hid him. Then when she was asleep the boy put Angarmati on his horse and rode away.

The boy brought Angarmati to the Sadhu and the Sadhu married them. Then said the boy, 'I have six mothers and they are all blind. What can I do?' The Sadhu said, 'Take these ashes and put them on your mothers' eyes and they will see.' The boy took his bride home and put the ashes on his mothers' eyes and they were healed. There in the garden he built a great Palace, greater than the Raja's Palace. The Raja planned to fight against this stranger and destroy him, but he had a dream which told him that it was his own son.

So the Raja went to the boy and called him to the Palace to

give him the kingdom. But the boy said, 'Until you bury your Rani alive I will not come.' So the Raja had the Rani buried in a pit and brought the six old Ranis back and they all lived happily together.

3

THE NINE SCORE AND ONE BABIES

A Muria story from Kanhargaon, Bastar State

A Raja had seven wives; not one of them had a child. One day a beggar came with his wife to beg. The Raja thought, 'Perhaps I will get a child from this beggar-woman', and he gave money to the man and sent him away, but kept the woman in his house. Four or six months later, the woman became pregnant. The Raja made her two flutes, one for sorrow and one for joy, and gave them to her saying, 'Wherever I may be, if you are in any trouble play on the flute of sorrow and I will come.' After a few days he went to the forest to hunt.

The beggar-girl wondered in her mind how much love the Raja really had for her. So she took out the flute of sorrow and played it. The Raja heard it and came running back, but when he found the girl was all right he was very angry, and said he would never come again when she played the flute.

Now the woman's time approached, and her pains began. The seven wives came to her and tied her hands and feet and blindfolded her, and put a heavy stone on her chest. But as she lay there nine score sons and one daughter were born to her. The seven wives were afraid when they saw this; they took the children and threw them into the buffaloes' shed. In their place they put by the mother's side a grindstone.

When the Raja returned, he asked whether a boy or a girl had been born. The seven wives cried, 'Look what this woman has done; she has given birth to a grindstone.' The Raja was very angry and drove the mother from his house.

Now the chief buffalo understood what had happened and said to the other buffaloes, 'We must care for these children, and give them our milk. Otherwise when the Raja hears of it, he will kill us. Presently the seven wives went to the buffalo-shed to see

whether the babies were alive or no, but they found them playing on the ground. So now they took the babies and threw them into a well at the bottom of a Marar's garden.

Now this Marar and his wife had no children. In the morning they went to the well to get water for their garden. When they pulled up the bucket, they found one baby in it. They were very pleased, saying, 'At last God has given us a child.' Then gradually the nine score boys and one girl came out of the well, and the Marar and his wife took them to their house and cared for them. Gradually the babies grew up.

One day the babies went to the river and there the seven wives saw them. They were afraid, saying, 'Look, these children are getting bigger and bigger; soon the Raja will see them and know the whole story.' So they made magic bread and gave it to the children. When they ate it, they turned into monkeys and ran away into the jungle. Only the little girl did not eat, and she followed them in her own form. To save herself from the other animals in the jungle, she climbed a tree and lived there. The monkey-children lived round about, eating leaves and fruit.

One day a hunter came to that jungle, and sat beneath the tree. The girl began to cry and one of her tears fell on his cheek. When he felt it, he looked up to see what there was in the tree. When he saw her beauty he was pleased, and called her down. She told him the story of what had happened. 'If I turn your brothers again into men, will you marry me?' asked the hunter. She promised that she would. Then the hunter by his magic turned all those monkeys back into boys, and he took them home. He married the girl, and after some days told the brothers that they should go and earn their own living.

But when the boys went away, they began to make mischief everywhere. Some stole fruit and grain, some broke the pots of the neighbours, some troubled the cattle. The villagers sent a report to the Raja asking where these nine score brothers came from. The Raja sent a constable to arrest them, but they beat him and sent him back. Then the Raja sent soldiers, but the boys said, 'We will kill this Raja; who is he?'

At last the Raja sent many soldiers and they arrested the boys and brought them to the Palace. But the boys said to the Raja, 'We want to kill you, for you have wronged us.' 'How have I

wronged you?' asked the Raja. 'You are our father,' said the boys. 'Your seven wives threw us in the buffaloes' shed, and then into the well, and at last turned us into monkeys.' When he heard this, the Raja sent men to find the beggar-woman. When they brought her, dirty and in rags, he made her stand at one end of the room and put the boys at the other end. Between them he stretched a cloth and said, 'If this woman's milk goes into the mouths of the boys, then we will know that she is their mother.' As he spoke streams of milk flowed from the beggar-woman's breasts and passed into the mouths of the boys. The Raja said, 'Now I know that you are truly my Rani and these boys are my sons.'

The Raja sent for the seven wives; some he hanged, others he nailed to a tree, others he buried alive. But the beggar-woman he kept with honour, and he married his sons to the daughters of great Rajas.

4

THE BRAVE CHILDREN

A Baiga story from Karadih, Mandla District

In Kanchanpur there lived a Raja. He had three queens but no son. One day he sent for his Baiga Dewar and asked him what he should do. The Dewar said that if he took one more queen, he would get a son. When he heard this, the Raja went round his villages, and at last he found a Gond whose daughter was young and beautiful and took her for his wife.

After twelve months the Gond queen became pregnant. When the time for her delivery grew near, the Raja wanted to go out hunting, but the queen said, 'How will you know when your child is born?' 'Tie a bell here,' she said, 'and when my pains begin I'll ring it and you can come home quickly.'

So the Raja went out to hunt. When he had reached the heart of the forest, the queen thought, 'Let me ring the bell and see if he will really come or no.' She rang the bell and the Raja came back and when he saw nothing had happened, he was very angry and went away again.

A few days later the queen's pains began. She called her three elder sister-queens, and said, 'Today my pains have begun.' They

said, 'Put your head in the hole at the bottom of the grain-bin.' The young queen did so and presently a girl and a boy were born. The three queens took the children and locked them up in a box and threw it into the sea. Then they came home and put a grindstone by the girl and then rang the bell as hard as they could. The Raja heard the noise of the bell. He had killed five deer, but now he hurried home. The three queens ran to him, shouting, 'Your darling has given birth to a grindstone and nothing else. Only a witch would do so.' When he saw this, the Raja was very angry and stripped the girl of her fine clothes and dressed her in torn rags and shaved her head and put a bamboo stick in her hand and sent her into the fields to drive away crows. The three other queens then began to live in the Palace with great content.

The box floated and floated down the seacoast. On the shore a Sadhu was bathing. He was one who had never eaten grain. He lived on the juice of the dub grass. When the Sadhu saw the box he thought that perhaps there was something to eat in it. He carried it up to his hut and opened it. When he saw the children, he was very angry and threw them down on the ground, but after thinking a little he took them into his hut. There was nothing for them to eat. But by his magic he made milk everywhere round the hut, and the children drank and grew strong.

At last the Sadhu said, 'Come, I'll take you to a town where you will find work. I am only a Sadhu and live always on dub grass: how can I go on feeding you?' So he took them to the very town where they had been born. On the way the night came upon them and they had nothing to eat or drink. But in that place were two little sticks, one was three fingers long and had the power of giving water: the other was four fingers long and could give pulse and rice. The Sadhu took food and water for them, but didn't show the children what he had done. When they had eaten, the girl went to sleep but the boy kept awake to watch the Sadhu for fear that he would run away and leave them alone. In the middle of the night he saw the Sadhu get up and prepare to go away. The boy ran and caught him by the feet. 'At least, if you are going give us some blessing,' he cried.

So that Sadhu said, 'If ever you are in trouble, then say, "Let such and such a thing happen by the power of our Sadhu," and it will happen.'

Then the Sadhu went away and the boy slept. In the morning the little girl cried very much when she found the Sadhu had gone, but soon they were happy again, and the boy took the two magic sticks and they set out. When they were about a mile away from their father's Palace, the boy said to the stick, 'By the power of the Sadhu, let there be a city, a Palace, an army, elephants and horses, and we ruling over them all.'

Immediately there was a golden Palace before them, and many servants bowing them into their kingdom. Elephants and horses stood on every side.

One day when the boy was in his court and the girl in the Palace, an Ahirin went by. The girl called her and asked, 'Who are you and where have you been?'

'I am an Ahirin,' said she. 'And I have been to sell my curds and milk and now I am going home.'

The girl said, 'Tomorrow bring your curds and milk to me, and I will give you a winnowing-fan full of rice for it.'

The next day the Ahirin brought her curds and milk and took away the rice and cooked it. The scent of the rice was so sweet that you could smell it for miles round. The Raja was in his garden and smelt it. The queens were in the Palace and they smelt it also. They went to the Ahirin's house and asked her where she got it. The Ahirin told them, and so the following day, one of the queens by her magic took the form of the Ahirin and went to the girl with a potful of curds. The queens had already decided that these two must be the children whom they had thrown into the sea. There was poison in the pot of curds.

Now the brother and sister loved one another so much that they always ate from the same plate and slept in the same bed. The girl was very pleased at getting so much curd. She said, 'We'll eat it today.' But her brother said, 'Let's give it to the crows first and see if it is all right.' They gave it to the crows and they died. The brother and sister were frightened. 'Who can be our enemy in this place?' they wondered.

The next day the queen came and was astonished to see that the girl was still alive. 'I put so much poison in their food, what shall I do now?' Thus she thought. Then she said to the girl, 'You have a beautiful golden Palace, but there are no lotus flowers here. Why not get some from the lake on the top of yonder hill?'

Now there was only one way up to that lake. There were three gates on the road. The first was guarded by Rakshasa, the second by snakes, the third by tigers. The queen thought that the children were certain to be killed if they tried to climb the hill that way.

The girl's mind was filled with the thought of the lotus. She begged her brother to go and get some for her. The boy set out and when he came to the first gate he climbed a tree and saw the Rakshasa and snakes and tigers that were stopping his way. So he took the magic stick and said, 'Become a sword and kill all these enemies.' The stick became a sword and flew throughout the air and killed the snakes and tigers. It killed all the Rakshasa save one. This was a very old Rakshasa and he came to the boy and fell at his feet and promised to be his slave.

The boy then climbed the hill and brought many lotus flowers. The Rakshasa came with him in the form of a man. The girl was very happy and she decorated the whole Palace with the flowers.

The following morning the queen came again to the Palace and when she saw the flowers she thought 'What shall I do now? I will send them to the Pathari Kaniya.' So she said to the girl, 'How beautiful your Palace is now! But you need one thing more. You need a wife for your brother. Get Pathari Kaniya to marry him.'

This thought stuck in the girl's mind. She went and sat in a corner and refused to eat. When her brother came, he said, 'What's the matter?' 'Nothing,' she said. 'But there must be something.' 'No, it is nothing. Only call the Stone Maiden from the top of the rocky hill and marry her.'

When the boy heard that he was filled with love for Pathari Kaniya and he took the old Rakshasa and they climbed the hill together. There they saw on every side soldiers, elephants, horses, all turned to stone. For everyone who heard the voice of Pathari Kaniya was turned into stone.

The boy was very frightened but he went to the door of Pathari Kaniya's house and cried, 'O Pathari Kaniya, come here!' And she answered from within, 'Who are you?' When he heard her voice, his body turned to stone up to the knees.

Then she cried a second time, 'Who are you?' and now he turned to stone as far as the waist.

A third time she cried, 'Who are you?' and now he became stone as far as his neck.

Now he thought, 'If she speaks another word, my whole body will be stone.' He called his magic stick and told it to save him. The stick touched him and he became flesh once more. Then the stick beat at the door of the girl's house and broke it down and went inside and struck her on the face. She trembled and said, 'I will marry him, and he need have no fear. Only don't beat me.'

Then the stick ordered her to come outside. She came to the boy, but she said, 'I will marry you, but first turn these stones back to flesh, for they came here for love of me.'

Then the stick touched all those stone men and elephants and horses and they came back to life. They went down the hill and the boy gave them land in his village.

From now on Pathari Kaniya lived with the boy. The queen came again and asked to see her. When she saw that the boy had really married Pathari Kaniya she fainted and when she recovered she went away, believing that these two were so powerful that nothing could harm them.

When the queen returned to the Palace with this news, the three queens tore their clothes, let down their hair, removed their ornaments and sat silent in a dirty corner of the house. The Raja said, 'Why, what is this?'

They answered, 'We are called queens, but you have never given a great feast in our honour.'

The Raja answered, 'Is that all? I'll give a feast for you at once.' He invited everyone in his kingdom to come. He also invited the boy and his sister and the people in their village. The boy forbade anyone from his village to go. He himself and the old Rakshasa went to the feast, but no one else.

On the way the Rakshasa said, 'Touch nothing in the Palace. Give everything they offer you to me.'

When they reached the Palace they sat down to talk and smoke their leaf-pipes, and the Rakshasa turned himself into a fly and flew off to the kitchen to see what they were cooking and to taste the food. On one table he saw some specially good food, bread, vegetable, halwa and other sweets. He settled on it and his head began to spin round and round. Then he knew that this food was poisoned.

So the Rakshasa turned himself into the shape of a man and went to the kitchen and said he was hungry. The cook gave him a plateful of rice. But the Rakshasa suddenly turned into his proper shape and in one gulp ate all the food that had been prepared. There was so much food with the poison that it did him no harm.

When evening came and there was nothing for the guests to eat, the Raja got very angry. He called the cook and said, 'Where is the food?' The cook said, 'We are just getting the fires ready.' The guests began to shout and scream with rage. The boy called them to his own Palace. On the way he said to the magic stick, 'Have a great feast ready in my house.' When the guests arrived, there it was ready. The boy's father and the three queens also came. The boy and his sister sat before them and told them the whole story. When the Raja understood it was his own son, he wept and embraced him.

Then the boy said, 'Where is that poor widow who drives away the crows? The Raja said, 'Fetch her at once.' But the boy said, 'First bury these three queens alive in the road, and put wood over them and a lighted lamp, and then let my mother be carried here in a litter over their bodies.'

So it was done and they all lived together rejoicing.

5

THE TALE OF LALPILA

A Baiga story from Taliyapani, Mandla District

There was a king who had six wives, but not one of them bore him a child. Daily the king would go hunting. One day he made a platform beside a lake and sat there watching for animals to come to drink. In the top of the tree sat the Queen of the Forest and she was weeping. Her tear-drops fell on the breast of the king. He called three or four servants, and said, 'Look, look, water is falling on my chest.' They looked up into the tree but could see nothing. But there was a one-eyed man there and he cried, 'There is something there.' Then he called to the Queen of the Forest, 'Tell us, are you a Devata, or a Rakshasa, or a Bhut or a Pret, or what are you? Come down.' But she replied, 'No, I dare

not; you may beat me. But at last she came down and they prepared her a splendid meal which she ate. 'It seems,' whispered the king's servants, 'that she has not eaten for many a day.' She stayed with the king for a night and the next day he took her home with him.

When the six queens saw it, they said, 'So that is what he was up to when we thought he had gone hunting.' In the city the news spread quickly and there was great excitement. The citizens came to the Palace to see the Queen of the Forest. Three nights passed and then with great ceremony the king married her. The other queens were jealous: they would not talk with her, and she felt very lonely, especially as the king went out daily for hunting. Two or three years passed and then the Queen of the Forest found herself with child. She said, 'Look, my king, daily you go out hunting, and leave me alone here. Who knows what may not happen when the child is born.' The king said, 'I will put a big bell on the top of the Palace, and when the child is born, ring it and I will come at once.'

At last the child was to be born and the king was away from home. In her pain the Queen of the Forest forgot to ring the bell. Then those six queens took her and pushed her into a grain-bin by the small hole at the bottom. Her beautiful son fell down outside. They took him away and put a stone in his place. It was so dark there that the poor queen could not see what had been born to her. They put the child in the buffalo-shed and hoped that the buffaloes would trample on it. After two days the king returned. They showed the stone to the king and said, 'Your jungly queen has given birth to a stone.' He put his hands to his cheeks and with a face full of sorrow sat down. The Queen of the Forest was shaved in four places, and was sent away to work in the fields driving away crows. Two of the queens went to see the baby and found a buffalo suckling it. So they took it to the goat-shed instead. After two or three days the old man and woman who used to graze the goats came to clean the shed and began to remove the grass and refuse. The woman found the baby and wrapping it in a cloth took it away. She called the old man and said, 'See, I have found the son of the Forest Queen in the goat-shed.' The old man killed a goat and made the signs of birth in his house and declared, 'In our old age God has given

us a son.' Then he went to get milk-medicine for his wife. Presently milk came from the old woman's breast and she began to suckle the child.

In eight months the child could sit and stand. In three or four years he could walk and run. He saw other children playing and asked his father to make him a bow and arrow. He shot green pigeons on the big tree and brought them to his father. In his catapult were seven stones. The other children often missed but this boy always hit the mark. The children used to ride on horses to the river to bathe, and so Lal (which was the name his foster-parents gave him) went and asked his father to make a horse for him. The old man took twenty rupees to the carpenter and asked him to make a horse for his son. 'You must have it ready in five days,' he said. 'Here are ten rupees and in five days I will give you ten more.' In five days he brought Lal his horse. The boy kissed it and said, 'You are the horse that will take me to my mother.' Then he went with the other children, driving his wooden horse. They had a race, but the wooden horse went much faster than any of the others.

Lal went home and took his food. Then he went to the river where the six queens were bathing and ordered his horse to drink. 'Go, drink water,' he said. He dipped its wooden mouth in the water. The queens heard him. 'Fool, why are you asking a wooden horse to drink? Has your father seen or have you seen a wooden horse drink water?' Then the boy answered 'That is all right. But have you seen or has your father seen a stone ever born to a human being?' The queens began to murmur among themselves and their hearts beat fast. Some of them bathed, some did not. They returned home, but they took no food; they went and lay down on their beds. When the king came in, he was surprised because daily it was their custom to give him water and to serve him, but on that day they were all lying on their beds. 'What has happened? Have you got fever?' he asked. They told him what the boy with the wooden horse had said. Into the king's mind the thought flashed, 'Perhaps this is my true son,' and he sent his soldiers to bring the boy to him. The old man shivered with fright when they arrived demanding the boy. They wept and cried, 'What will happen to our boy?' But Lal said, 'Don't be afraid,' and he went off boldly to the court. There he told the whole story,

and when he had finished he said, 'Go and bring the queen whom you have kept in your fields to drive away the crows, and I will prove my story.'

Two soldiers went to bring the Queen of the Forest, and when she came the king asked her to stand on the threshold. Between Lal and the queen was placed a screen of sevenfold thickness. Lal said, 'If the woman on the other side of the screen is my mother, then if she presses her breast, milk will flow: it will drench the screen and will come to my mouth.' Then the Queen of the Forest pressed her breast and the milk flowed out through the screen into Lal's mouth. He cried, 'See, this is my mother.' He turned to the courtiers and said, 'You are wise men. Tell me, have you ever seen a stone born of a human being?' They replied, 'Never. Truly you are the prince.' And so the king brought back the Queen of the Forest and he banished the other six queens from his court.

NOTE I

Milk-medicine

Artificial lactation (which when induced in old women has been called by Bartels *Lactatio Serotina*¹) is not unknown in tribal India and occurs occasionally in its oral literature. Here, however, it is not generally old women in whom a lacteal secretion is induced but more frequently younger women who have never borne children at all. Thus in the Betul Gond story of Rai Linga, after the miraculous arrival of a child in the lap of Queen Barren (Janam-Banjheli Rani), she finds there is no milk in her breasts and sends her Raja to bring milk-medicine (*pade masala*) from the bazaar. She eats it and milk comes to her.² I came across a number of such cases among the Baiga. One woman who had not had a child for twelve years adopted an orphan baby, took milk-medicine and was able to suckle the child. Another woman who had never had a child took the medicine, which was made by grinding the root of the dudhi bel (a creeper, the *doemia extensa*?) and with a little trouble was able to feed her sister's child.³

Many examples of artificial lactation have been reported from Africa and from Java. Junod describes how an old woman managed to ensure secretion of milk in her breasts to feed her orphaned grandson.⁴ Gatti describes a similar achievement in the

¹ H. H. Ploss and M. & P. Bartels, *Woman* (Eng. ed., London, 1935), iii, 211.

² Trench, ii, 16.

³ *The Baiga*, 229.

⁴ H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (London, 1912), i, 49.

case of a young Zulu girl.¹ The Culwicks give a number of cases collected from among the Ubena.²

It is said that where milk is thus artificially secreted in the withered breasts of old women it is very watery and may take any time from three to ten days to secrete.

NOTE 2

Petrification

The motif of human beings who are turned into stone is very ancient and widespread. The classical tale of Medusa's head which turned into stone whoever looked on it finds a parallel in the Russian tale of Ivan Devich. A Baba Yoga gives him one of her hairs and tells him to tie three knots in it and blow. When he does this he and his horse are turned into stone. A well-known instance of the power of magicians to petrify their victims occurs in the Arabian Nights where a youth is discovered reading the Koran, the lower half of his body having been turned into marble by the magic arts of his wicked wife. These incidents seem to go back to the story of Lot's wife who, looking back to the burning cities of the plain, which she was expressly forbidden to do, was turned into a pillar of salt.³

For petrification is generally the penalty for some breach of taboo. 'Petrification', says Macculloch, 'is as universally believed in as transformation into animal shape. It was probably suggested by the fact that many rocks bear some resemblance to human form or that fossil animals are replicas of their living forms, or from a confusion of the monolith erected over a grave with the ghost believed to tenant it (many stone circles and monoliths are believed traditionally to be petrified men and women). Usually the belief takes the form that certain rocks or stones were once human beings who were changed to stone as a punishment.'⁴

The motif is fairly common in the Indian tales. Stokes has a story of a prince in search of a magic fruit, who is warned by a fakir not to look back on his way home, or he will be turned to stone. The taboo is broken and the prince petrified, but he is restored when the fakir cuts open his little finger and smears the blood on his forehead.

There are Kashmir tales on the same theme: in one, four princes are turned into stone by a Jogi⁵; in another, two princes go in search of a wonderful bird and are petrified when they turn back in fear.⁶ In a Santal tale a Jogi turns into stone seven brothers who have followed him to rescue a girl from his clutches.⁷

¹ A. Gatti, *Hidden Africa* (London, 1933), 68.

² A. T. & G. M. Culwick, *Ubena of the Rivers* (London, 1935), 390 ff.

³ Clouston, i, 168 f. ⁴ Macculloch, 156. ⁵ Knowles, 101 ff.

⁶ Ibid., 401 ff. ⁷ Bompas, 222. See also Parker, ii, 245; ii, 375.

There is a tragic legend recorded by Crooke.¹ On the borders of the Nahan State and British territory, two towns known as Giri-Kota lie on opposite sides of a river. One day a Natin or rope-dancing girl came to the Raja and offered to cross the river on a rope with a flour-mill tied to her feet. When she was doing the feat the Raja cut the rope and she fell into the river and was killed. With her dying breath she cursed the Raja and his people that they should be turned into stone and that their city should become a wilderness. The prophecy was fulfilled and the town was destroyed. Nowadays when men dig on the site of the old city they find stone figures which are said to be those of the Raja and his people.

In this book we have two types of petrification. The first, in Chap. VI, 4, is an example of the Medusa motif where the hero like many of his predecessors is petrified by talking to a maiden who has this uncanny and dangerous power. In two other stories the petrification is regarded as the penalty for revealing secrets. In Chap. XIII the cowherd who reveals his secret to the Raja is turned into stone and the Raja himself is saved from a similar fate at the last moment. In another story the faithful servant who has overheard the fate that may overcome his master is forced to reveal his secret and is turned into stone as a punishment. This is a very familiar folk-tale incident of which Grimm's story of Faithful John is typical. The friend of a king learns that he is in danger, but at the same time discovers the way to save him, though if ever he reveals the secret he will be turned to stone. Faithful to the end he is found in questionable situations, and the king demands an explanation. The friend is turned to stone. But it is also revealed that he will recover life if the king's son is slain, and his blood rubbed on the statue. When the sacrifice is made, the friend comes to life and goes off to seek the Water of Life, with which he restores the little child.² Modified by Christianity, the incident of the child's death and restoration are utilized to confirm belief in the miraculous power of the saints. But in the more primitive and pagan versions of the story the child has clearly been offered as a sacrifice to the gods, who, in turn, restore the petrified man.

In our text also the friend who is turned to stone can only be restored by the sacrifice of a little child.

Throughout central India may be found the petrified bodies of ancient heroes. On the Ahlor Hill in Surguja is the stone body of a deified Ahir who lost his legs in battle, and is now worshipped by the Manjhi.³ The stone image of Neng Mudial is honoured in Bastar, and scrapings of his stone are valuable as an aphrodisiac.

¹ *N.I. Notes and Queries*, v, 126.

² Russell and Hiralal, iv, 150.

³ Macculloch, 423.

NOTE 3

Searching for Water

This is another of those motifs which would never be recognized as such by the casual reader. To go off somewhere to look for water is so obvious and natural a thing to do, yet it is one of the most stereotyped technical tricks of the Indian story-teller. Bloomfield has given many references to its occurrence in the *Katha Sarit Sagara* as well as in Hindu literature and in the folk-tales.¹ It is another useful mechanism for separating characters from one another, moving them about and thus advancing the plot.

¹ Penzer, vii, p. xxiv.

THE CONTEST CYCLE

THESE contest stories have a distinguished ancestry. They derive originally from the famous tale in the *Panchatantra* which was reproduced by Somadeva in the *Katha Sarit Sagara*.

Once on a time a hermit found a young mouse, which had escaped from the claws of a kite, and pitying it, made it by the might of his asceticism into a young maiden. And he brought her up in his hermitage; and, when he saw that she had grown up, wishing to give her to a powerful husband, he summoned the sun. And he said to the sun: 'Marry this maiden, whom I wish to give in marriage to some mighty one.' Then the sun answered: 'The cloud is more powerful than I; he obscures me in a moment.' When the hermit heard that, he dismissed the sun, and summoned the cloud, and made the same proposal to him. He replied: 'The wind is more powerful than I; he drives me into any quarter of the heaven he pleases.' When the hermit got this answer, he summoned the wind, and made the same proposal to him. And the wind replied: 'The mountains are stronger than I, for I cannot move them.' When the great hermit heard this, he summoned the Himalaya, and made the same proposal to him. That mountain answered him: 'The mice are stronger than I, for they dig holes in me.'

Having thus got these answers in succession from those wise divinities, the great Rishi summoned a forest mouse, and said to him: 'Marry this maiden.' Thereupon the mouse said: 'Show me how she is to be got into my hole.' Then the hermit said: 'It is better that she should return to her condition as a mouse.' So he made her a mouse again, and gave her to that male mouse.

Another tale in the *Katha Sarit Sagara* furnishes an amusing parallel.

There was once a simple but good-looking Chandala maiden, and she formed in her heart the determination to win for her bridegroom a universal monarch. Once on a time she saw the supreme sovereign go out to make a progress round his city, and she proceeded to follow him,

with the intention of making him her husband. At that moment a hermit came that way, and the king, though mounted on an elephant, bowed at his feet, and returned to his own Palace. When she saw that, she thought that the hermit was a greater man even than the king, and abandoning him, she proceeded to follow the hermit. The hermit, as he was going along, beheld in front of him an empty temple of Siva, and kneeling on the ground, he worshipped Siva, and then departed. Then the Chandala maiden thought that Siva was greater even than the hermit, and she left the hermit and attached herself to the god, with the intention of marrying him. Immediately a dog entered, and going up on to the pedestal of the idol, lifted up his leg, and behaved after the manner of the dog tribe. Then the Chandala maiden thought that the dog was superior even to Siva, and leaving the god, followed the departing dog, desiring to marry him. And the dog entered the house of a Chandala, and out of affection rolled at the feet of a young Chandala whom it knew. When she saw that, she concluded that the young Chandala was superior to the dog, and satisfied with her own caste, she chose him as her husband.

This story naturally went round the world. In Europe a similar cycle of tales is concerned with the contest between Truth and Falsehood. A Hungarian story recounted by Macculloch describes how Truth, refusing to admit that Falsehood is better, is blinded and left helpless by the latter. Lying near a gallows she hears two devils talking. One announces that he has just killed a physician, who had discovered that if cripples rolled about, and the blind washed their eyes in the dew on the night of the new moon, they would be healed. The other declares he has cut off the water-supply of the next town. Truth takes advantage of what she has heard, rubs her eye-sockets with dew, and has her sight restored. Then she goes to the town and tells how the supply of water may be recovered. She is honoured and well paid. Meanwhile Falsehood has become very poor and goes to Truth for food. In exchange for it her eyes are put out and her arms cut off, and Truth leads her to the gallows. There the devils find her, and, supposing she is the person who listened to their conversation, tear her in pieces. In several variants two companions or two brothers take the place of Truth and Falsehood,

and sometimes, as in the Lorraine variant, they cast lots as to who should be blinded in order to be in a better position to beg. This one is then ill-treated by the other and abandoned.¹

Among Indian folk-tales the contest theme appears to be most popular with the Santal. There is a delightful story about a Musahar who had a daughter so beautiful that she seemed more than human and whom he therefore desired to marry to the greatest person in the world. He took her to Chando, the Sun God, and suggested that he should marry her. Chando answered, 'I fancy there is some one greater than I, for the Cloud can hide my face and quench my rays.'

At this the father and mother hurried off with their daughter in search of the Cloud, and when they found him, told him that they had brought their daughter to give him to wife, as he was the greatest being in the world. 'I may be great', said the Cloud, 'but there is a greater than I, the Wind. The Wind rises and blows me away in a minute.' So they went in search of the Wind and when they found him, explained to him why they had brought him their daughter. The Wind said, 'I am strong, but there are stronger than I: the Mountains are stronger. I can blow things down or whirl them away, but I cannot move the Mountains.'

So on they went to the Mountain and explained their errand. The Mountain said, 'I am great, but there are more powerful than I. The ground-rat is more powerful, for however high I may be the ground-rats burrow holes in me and I cannot resist them.'

The poor parents by this time began to feel rather discouraged, but still they made up their minds to persevere and went on to look for the ground-rat. They found him and offered him their daughter in marriage, but the ground-rat denied that he was the most powerful being on earth; the Musahar were more powerful for they lived by digging out ground-rats and eating them.²

Another Santal story, called 'Wealth or Wisdom', is about a prince and a merchant who argue whether wealth or wisdom is the more powerful. The prince declares for wealth and the merchant, curiously enough, for wisdom. They agree that

¹ Macculloch, 68. An Indian parallel occurs in *N.I. Notes and Queries*, v, 103. Cf. Clouston, i, 249 ff.

² Bompass, 169. Cf. *J.B.O.R.S.*, xii, 566.

each shall take service with some master for a year to put the matter to a test. The prince takes his money, begins to lead a riotous life and is soon reduced to starvation. The merchant finds employment with a teacher in a school. They both later take service with a farmer and have many involved adventures in the course of which the merchant by his wisdom gets the better of the farmer, burns down his house, kills his bullock and abducts his wife, while the prince by his money gets nothing but starvation and trouble. The story is not presented as based on moral principles, but undoubtedly proves that the intelligent use of wisdom is more potent than the foolish use of wealth.¹

The Santal also tell the famous story of the Wind and the Sun which I suspect was derived from some literary source.

Once the Wind and the Sun disputed as to which was the more powerful. And while they were quarrelling a man came by wrapped in a shawl and wearing a big pagri. And they said, 'It is no good quarrelling; let us put our power to the test and see who can deprive this man of the shawl he has wrapped round him.' Then the Wind asked to be allowed to try first and said, 'You will see that I will blow away the blanket in no time'; and the Sun said, 'All right, you go first.' So the Wind began to blow hard; but the man only wrapped his shawl more tightly round him to prevent its being blown away and fastened it round himself with his pagri; and though the Wind blew fit to blow the man away, it could not snatch the shawl from him; so it gave up and the Sun had a try; he rose in the sky and blazed with full force and soon the man began to drip with sweat; and he took off his shawl and hung it on the stick he carried over his shoulder and the Wind had to admit defeat.²

The dispute between a bear and a tiger as to which is the coldest season of the year appears, however, to be more primitive.

One winter day a bear and a tiger began to dispute as to which is the coldest season of the year; the bear said July and August, which is the rainy season, and the tiger said December and January, which is the winter season.

¹ Bompas, 257.

² Ibid., 314.

They argued and argued but could not convince each other; for the bear with his long coat did not feel the cold of winter but when he got soaked through in the rain he felt chilly.

At last they saw a man coming that way and called on him to decide—'but have a care'—said the tiger—'if you give an opinion favourable to the bear, I will eat you'; and the bear said, 'If you side with the tiger, I will eat you.' At this the man was terror-stricken but an idea struck him and he made the tiger and the bear promise not to eat him if he gave a fair decision and then he said, 'It is not the winter which is the coldest, nor the rainy season which is the coldest, but windy weather; if there is no wind no one feels the cold much either in the winter or in the rainy season.' And the tiger and the bear said, 'You are right, we never thought of that' and they let him go.¹

M'Culloch has a Bengali tale which describes a contest between a Raja's son and a minister's son about the merits of Learning and Motherwit, which leads them to many adventures.²

The tales of this type thus fall into two classes. The first is a straightforward debate with practical illustrations leading to a speedy conclusion. The second is an adventure tale rather loosely built up on the contest framework. Both classes are represented in this Chapter.

I

WEALTH AND WISDOM

A Muria story from Ulera, Bastar State

Wealth and Wisdom met by the wayside and disputed which was the greater. As they went along quarrelling they came to a city where a Raja lived. There were many thieves there who troubled the people. The Raja had lost his horse. At last, the Raja went to find his horse himself. He took an umbrella in his hand, tied half his dhoti round his waist and slung the rest over his shoulder and went out.

Night fell and it began to rain. The Raja sheltered in the ver-

¹ Bompas, 314.

² M'Culloch, 235. Shovona Devi also has a contest between Wit and Wealth, 37 ff.

andah of a certain Ganda. Presently the Ganda's wife came out to throw away some water and saw him and ran in crying, 'One of the thieves is hiding on the verandah !' The people ran out and began to beat the Raja. The Raja cried, 'I'm no thief, I'm the Raja', but the people said, 'Does our Raja go about like this? He sits on his throne.' They went on beating the unlucky man till one of his legs was broken, and the Ganda picked him up and threw him on the highroad.

The Raja lay in great pain on the road, and soon Wealth and Wisdom came by disputing loudly. They stopped to see what was the matter and the Raja told them what had happened. Then they said, 'If you are a Raja, decide our case for us. Tell us which is the greater.' The Raja said, 'In my opinion you are both equal.' Wealth said, 'This is no decision. Look, whichever of us can mend this Raja's broken leg will be the greater.'

Wealth brought much gold and silver and heaped it round the leg, but it only hurt the more. Then Wisdom tied the leg with bits of wood and brought magic herbs from the forest and mended the leg so that the Raja was able to stand up and walk.

Then Wisdom said, 'So now I am the greater.' 'Nonsense', said Wealth. 'What is there in mending the leg of one man? I am the greater.' 'Let us see', said Wisdom. They went on their way and soon came to the house of a very poor Ganda boy; he was so poor that you could see his bones—all he got to eat were a few roots and mushrooms. Wealth said, 'Look at this wretched Ganda. Who could be poorer and more miserable? If I marry this boy to the Raja's daughter, will you admit that I am greater than you?' 'Certainly', said Wisdom, laughing at the idea.

Now the Ganda boy sowed maize in his garden. Wealth brought four heads to every stalk and every grain was gold. In time the merchants came to the village and bought the grain. The boy sold five heads of maize for one pice. The merchants took the maize home and saw that there was nothing there but gold. At that they were afraid, and decided to take the golden grain to the Raja as a present. When the Raja saw it, he sent for the Ganda boy and said, 'Give me all the maize in your garden and I will give you my daughter in marriage.'

The Ganda boy gave the Raja all his golden maize and in return received the princess in marriage. The two went to live

together in a good house in the city, but whenever the Ganda boy saw anything rich and costly he waved his hands as if he were weaving and cried '*Tukrus tukrus*'. His wife was annoyed at this and said to him, 'Now you are the Raja's son-in-law; you ought to be going to the court to learn your business.' And she said to herself, 'If he doesn't go to the court tomorrow, I will kill him and live without a husband.'

Then said Wisdom to Wealth, 'Well, you've married that wretched boy to the Raja's daughter, but what good has it done him? All he can do is to cry "*Tukrus tukrus*" and look for his shuttle, and tomorrow he is to die.' Wealth answered, 'Very well, let us agree that whoever saves his life will be the greater.' Wisdom agreed and at once went to the boy and filled his mind with knowledge. The next morning the boy got up early, bathed, went to the temple to worship and proceeded to the court. His wife was pleased and thought, 'At last my husband has learned some sense.' So the Ganda boy went daily to the court and in time became very clever in the arts of ruling a kingdom, until at last the Raja made him his Diwan.

Now Wealth and Wisdom met again and Wealth laughed saying, 'You made the boy Diwan and saved his life. But if I can turn him out of his office, which of us will be the greater?' Wisdom replied, 'Then you will indeed be the greater.'

Wealth went to see a certain Brahmin in the town and gave him much gold and silver. Presently the Brahmin went to the Raja and said, 'O Maharaja, you are a great Hindu Raja. You gave your daughter to a Ganda—we said nothing about that; but everyone is laughing at you for making a Ganda your Diwan. We beg you to remove him from his post and make another man Diwan.' The Raja answered, 'How can I turn him out? He does his work well.' The Brahmin answered, 'If he does his work so well, say this to him—"O Diwan, you are a Ganda and your skill is in weaving. I do not care to wear cloth made by ordinary weavers. I want a cloth made from a spider's web so that I can wear it when I go to the temple to worship". If he gives you such a cloth within a month, well; but if not, kill him.'

The Raja listened and when the Diwan came to see him, he told him to bring a cloth made from a spider's web. The Diwan went home and told his wife and children what had happened. For

fear, they began to wither away. But the youngest boy thought, 'If they all die, I will die too. I had better escape.' He took an umbrella and some food and ran away. In time he came to a city and the house of a merchant who had one daughter. The merchant had sixty ploughs. The boy joined the merchant, and when he crossed a river he put on his shoes, but when he was on dry land he carried them in his hand. When he was out in the rain he furled his umbrella, but when he reached the shelter of a tree he put it up.

One day the merchant was sitting in his field watching his servants sowing seed. The boy came to him and said, 'Uncle, are those your ploughs and bullocks? However many straw-bins can you make with the chaff of so many fields?' The merchant did not understand the question, so the boy kept on asking until at last the man was angry and went home. After his daughter had given him his food and returned into the kitchen the merchant began to laugh. The girl ran back and said, 'You haven't laughed during your meal before, why are you laughing now? I have good clothes today'—for she thought that perhaps he had seen her breasts or buttocks and was amused at that. He made no answer, so she took away his plate saying that till he told her the reason for his laughter he would get no food. At that he told her the story of the stupid boy. 'The memory of his stupidity made me laugh.' The girl said, 'Bring this boy to make me laugh also or I won't give you any food.'

The merchant had to go to fetch the boy. The boy said, 'I'm not coming. Go and ask your daughter if she's ripe or unripe.' The man went and asked her. She said, 'Ripe.' This time the boy said, 'Go and ask her if the trees have grown or no.' The girl replied, 'They are grown.' When he heard that the boy went to the house. The girl had put food ready in two or four places, on the verandah, near the door, in the middle of the room, and in the kitchen. The old man went in first and sat down to his food by the door. The boy sat down in the middle of the room. When they had finished, the boy slept. The man said to his daughter, 'Look at the fool; when there was food on the verandah, he went and sat inside the house.'

Then the girl explained to her father the meaning of these things. 'The boy wore his shoes in the water because you can't see what is

under your feet then, but in the open road you can see everything. He put up his umbrella under the tree because he was afraid some bird might let its droppings fall on him. I put those four plates, to see what caste he was. Had he been of low caste, he would have sat on the verandah. But as he is of high caste he came into the house and sat down in the room. Had he been a great eater, he would have gone into the kitchen.' She was pleased at finding an intelligent boy, of good caste and a moderate eater. The merchant laughed and decided to marry his daughter to this boy.

After their marriage, the boy began to remember his family and the danger they were in. After his wife had gone to sleep, he used to cry as he thought of them. In the morning the girl used to find the ground beneath their mat wet with his tears. After a few days she made the boy tell her what had happened, and when she heard the story she said, 'Don't be afraid. I will go and save them.'

When the boy and his wife reached the Palace they found the Diwan wasted away and ill for lack of food. But the girl said, 'Don't be afraid. Eat your food happily. I will arrange everything. I will give this Raja a cloth of spider-web.' The Diwan took some food and next day went to his court. After a little while the girl took a new earthen pot on her head and also went to the court. She greeted the Raja and said, 'You have asked my father-in-law for a cloth made of the webs of spiders. But such a cloth cannot be made like that. Here is a pot. Sit on it and break wind into it until it is full. Then we can make you the cloth at once.' The Raja was greatly upset at this and said, 'How can I fill such a pot with my wind?' The girl replied, 'Then how can we make a cloth for you out of the webs of spiders?'

The Raja said to his Diwan, 'I have changed my mind. You need not make me the cloth. You shall remain as my Diwan.' But after the Diwan and his daughter-in-law had gone home, the Brahmin came to the court and asked what had happened. The Raja told him and the Brahmin said, 'Very well, the Diwan has won his case. But test him once again. Ask him to bring you five seers of mosquitoes' bones.' So saying the Brahmin offered the Raja many rupees and went away. The Raja sent for the Diwan and said, 'Bring me five seers of mosquitoes' bones within a month, or I will have you killed.'

Once again the Diwan was in despair and refused all food.

But when the girl heard the story she said, 'There's nothing to be afraid of. I have saved you once and I'll save you again.' She made him eat his food and sent him to the court. Then she put parched gram in a basket, covered it with cloth, and followed him. She stood before the Raja and said, 'I have brought the mosquitoes' bones, but I must have scales to weigh them. They can only be weighed in scales of which the beam is the wind and the pans are heat.' When the Raja heard this, he said, 'But who can find such scales?' And the girl said, 'And who can find five seers of mosquitoes' bones?'

The Raja said to the Diwan, 'You need not bring me what I asked. You may remain as my Diwan.' And the girl took her father-in-law home. When the Brahmin came the Raja told him what had happened, and the Brahmin said, 'This girl is very clever. But now tell the Diwan to do this—make a well in his house and then pick it up and put it in the middle of the bazaar so that the merchants may have water to drink.' The Brahmin presented many rupees to the Raja and went away. Once again the Raja called his Diwan and told him what to do. 'If the work is not done within a month, I will have you killed', he said.

The Diwan came home in despair and refused to eat. But the girl said, 'This is nothing. Don't worry. I will save you once again.' But the Diwan said, 'No, this is a terrible matter.' He ate a little food, but he did not listen to the girl and dug a well inside his house. When it was ready he went to the court. The girl covered herself with mud and taking some strong rope in her hand followed him. When the Raja saw her, he asked her what was the matter. 'I was trying to pull our well out of the house to put it in the bazaar, but it was too heavy,' she said. 'Now send your well from the Palace to help me. We will tie one end of this rope round the neck of your well and one end round ours, and then your well can pull our well into the bazaar.'

The Raja was frightened and said, 'But how can I send my well to fetch yours?' The girl answered, 'And how can we lift a well out of the ground and put it in the bazaar?' Then the Raja said, 'This time you have defeated me. I will trouble you no more. Go in peace.'

This time when the Brahmin came to the court, the Raja abused him and told him that though he might have Wealth as his

friend, the girl had Wisdom and she was the stronger. He turned that Brahmin out of his kingdom and seized all his property.

Once more Wisdom met Wealth on the highroad. 'Who is the greater?' he cried. And Wealth replied sorrowfully, 'You are.'

2

WEALTH AND SLEEP

A Baiga story from Hirapur, Balaghat District

Once the Cow was disputing with the Wind who was greatest. Then Nanga Baiga came by and asked them why they were fighting. The Cow said, 'I am the greatest, for all over the world the crops grow by the help of my dung.'

Then Sorrow and Sleep came to that place. Sleep said, 'You are both wrong. I am the greatest, for whatever trouble or sorrow you have during the day, I can cure it at night.'

The Wind said, 'Yes, I am not great, for without the help of the clouds I cannot move.'

At last Wealth joined them. He said, 'I am the greatest, for where I live there is no need of dung, and the Wind cannot harm me, and Sleep comes unbidden, and no Sorrow can remain where I am.'

Sorrow said, 'He speaks truly. For where Wealth lives, I cannot live.'

Nanga Baiga heard them all, and he said, 'Truly there is none greater than Wealth.'

3

WEALTH AND DREAM

A Muria story from Aturgaon, Bastar State

Dream and Wealth were disputing which was the greater. When they could not agree they decided that each should hide in turn and whoever could find the other, yet not be found himself, would win the contest. Wealth hid himself first. He took the shape of a pot of rupees and hid in an ant-hill. Dream went to a very poor boy who was lying asleep and called his soul to come

out. When the soul came, Dream sent it to the ant-hill. It returned, and when the boy awoke he went to the ant-hill and dug up Wealth in the shape of the pot. Then Dream hid in the wind, and was blown here and there about the world. Wealth could not find him and when they met again admitted that he was the greater.

4

THE FOREST AND THE RIVER

A Kuruk story from Temra in Bastar State

Once in the olden days the Raja Saheb came to Chitrakot to hunt and called a Shikari and a Kuruk (fisherman) to help him.

First the Raja asked the Shikari, 'Are there more animals in the forest or in the river?'

The Shikari said, 'In the forest.' But the Kuruk said, 'In the river.'

When the sun was setting in the evening, the Kuruk said to the Shikari, 'Many animals come to the river bank to drink water: come and hide there so that you can shoot them.'

Now on the bank of the river near the falls and below them was a great tree which grew out of the head of a huge crocodile. Near this the Kuruk made the Shikari sit down.

As darkness fell the crocodile went out into the river to seek its food, carrying the tree with it, and went here and there about the river. Only the top branches of the tree showed above the water. Seeing this, the Shikari was very frightened and went away. In the morning the crocodile returned to its place and there was the tree on the bank as before.

When the Kuruk came to fetch the Shikari, the latter said, 'Your words are true' and they both went to the Raja.

The Raja again asked the Shikari, 'What have you to tell me now?'

The Shikari answered, 'What the Kuruk said is true. He has vanquished me.'

So ever since the Raja has taken few taxes from the Kuruk of Chitrakot and little begar, and we live free and happy.

NOTE I

Apparently Absurd Behaviour of a Son-in-law

The incident of the Ganda's son who goes to find a bride and first irritates and then amuses his father-in-law by what appears to be the absurd behaviour of wearing his shoes while crossing a river but taking them off in a road, and closing his umbrella under the open sky but putting it up below a tree, is paralleled in the Santal tale 'The Father-in-law's Visit'.

A father went with his daughter's son to visit some friends, and the son-in-law carried his shoes in his hand except when they came to a river when he always put them on; and when they were going along in the sun he carried his umbrella under his arm, but when they came to any shady trees he put it up; and he did the same on the way back. The old man was very astounded at this but made no remark. On reaching the house however he told his daughter that he was sorry that her husband was a mad man and told her what had happened. His daughter said, 'No, father, he is not mad: he has a very good reason; he does not wear his shoes on dry ground because he can see where he is going; but in a river you cannot see what is under-foot; there may be sharp stones or thorns and so he puts on his shoes then; and he puts up his umbrella under trees lest falling branches should hit him or the droppings of birds fall on him, but in the open he can see that there is nothing to hurt him.'

Her father admitted that these were good reasons and he had been foolish not to understand them; he then took his leave.¹

There is a rather similar incident in another Santal tale, 'The Bridegroom who Spoke in Riddles'.²

NOTE 2

The 'Impossibilities' Motif

There is a fresh and interesting example of this motif in the first story of this Chapter. When the Raja orders his Diwan to make him a cloth out of spiders' webs, the heroine proves the impossibility of the test by proposing to the Raja a similar impossibility, that he should break wind into a pot until it is completely full. Again when he demands that his Diwan should bring him five seers of mosquitoes' bones, she counters the test by saying that they must be weighed in scales of which the beam is the wind and the pans are heat. When he finally says that the Diwan must take the well out of the courtyard of his house and put it in the bazaar, she takes

¹ Bompas, 349.

² Ibid., 268 ff.

a rope and ties it to the well in the Palace courtyard saying that the well there must pull her well into the required position.

The most famous example of this motif is found in the story of St Augustine who once walked along the seashore meditating on the mystery of the Holy Trinity. As he went he saw a child trying to fill a hole in the sand with sea water. 'I am going to pour into this hole', said the boy, 'all the water of the great deep.' 'But that is impossible', exclaimed St Augustine. 'Not more impossible than for thee, O Augustine, to explain the mystery on which thou art meditating.'

Many other examples may be found in the literature of the world and they have been noted by Brown and Penzer.¹ In India the motif gives point to two of the famous tales of Akbar and Birbal. Akbar gave Birbal a fortnight's time to turn him into a Hindu. Birbal's daughter appeared before the court, represented herself as His Majesty's washerwoman, and said she was in gross error, for as she put the royal clothes into the water, the water caught fire and burnt up the clothes. 'Whoever heard of water catching fire?' inquired His Majesty. 'And whoever heard of a Mussalman becoming a Hindu?' was her retort.

Another time Akbar told Birbal to bring him some bullock's milk, otherwise he would have him flayed alive. Birbal's daughter went the next day to wash her clothes early in the morning on the banks of the Jumna. The Emperor saw her and asked why she had come out so early. 'Your Majesty', she replied, 'because my father was brought to bed of a son this morning.' This made the Emperor angry and he cried, 'You impudent girl, whoever heard of men having babies?' She answered, 'Well, Your Majesty, whoever heard of bullocks giving milk?'

The most common 'Impossibilities' story in the folk-tales of India is that of the oilman and the jackal of which a Chokh version appears in Chap. viii of this book. A merchant visits a village of Thag, and his host allows him to tie his horse to a tethering-pole in front of his house. Next morning, the rascal claims the horse as his on the grounds that his pole gives birth to a horse every year. The merchant goes to court where the case is going against him, until a jackal appears in his support. The jackal is very sleepy for, it says, a lake was on fire and it was busy all night eating the burnt fish. 'Whoever heard of a lake being on fire?' asks the magistrate. 'And whoever heard of a horse being born of a tethering-pole?' retorts the jackal.

This tale is very common. In Ramaswami Raju's collection, a thief steals a horse tethered to a tree and declares that he saw the tree eat it. The case is referred to a fox. The fox says it

¹ Penzer, iii, 250-51; v, 64-66. J.B.O.R.S., xii, 563; Brown in Penzer, v, 64.

feels sleepy. 'All last night the sea was on fire: I had to throw a lot of hay on it to quench the flames.'¹

In Swynnerton's version, an oilman claims a mare tied to an oil-press, and here the jackal says it was up all night throwing water with a sieve on the burning sea.²

There are similar tales recorded from the Santal,³ the Ho,⁴ and from Orissa⁵ and Ceylon.⁶

¹ Raju, 45.

³ Bompas, 49.

⁵ U. D. Gupta, 81.

² Swynnerton, 142.

⁴ *J.B.O.R.S.*, iv, 327.

⁶ Parker, i, 228.

THE CHEAT AND HIS WAYS

THE aboriginals of central India, so famous for their own simplicity and honesty, have always been a ready prey to the cheat and adventurer. By a curious turn of mind these honest folk delight in stories of cheats and applaud the clever tricks by which these get the better of their victims. This is no doubt connected with the particular form tribal humour often takes, which is to burlesque itself, to recognize and laugh at its own special follies. Stories of thieves and dacoity or of the organized brigandage which is so common in Hindu fiction¹ are less popular. In this Chapter there are a round score of different ways by which cheats manage to trick people out of their property. In most of them their victims exhibit an almost incredible stupidity. But the stupidity is different from reality not in kind but only in degree, as my own experience among aboriginals has often shown.

It may be of interest to summarize the different methods used by cheats in the stories of this and other collections.

1. A little ghee is placed at the top of a pot of dung, a few cowries are laid across the top of a basket of pebbles, or a pot of dung is covered with curds, and the hero or villain goes out to sell his wares. This method is paralleled in the South Indian story of the Tanjore rogue whose wife teaches him to cover a clay ball with rice. The Trichinopoly rogue fills a small brass vessel with sand and scatters a little rice upon it. As in our first story, the two rogues meet and deceive each other and then combine to go out to cheat the world.² In a Telugu tale, two men meet: one has a parcel of sand, the other a parcel of cowdung. Each cheats the other.³

2. A wooden axe is covered with a thin layer of iron, or iron bangles are covered with silver, and sold.

3. The rogues either find a dead body or, being anxious to dispose of the corpse of someone they have murdered, throw it into a stranger's garden and then come along and

¹ See M. Bloomfield, 'The Art of Stealing in Hindu Fiction', *A.J.P.*, xliv, 97 ff. and 193 ff.; and 'On Organized Brigandage in Hindu Fiction', *A.J.P.*, xlvii, 205 ff.

² Natesa Sastri, *Indian Antiquary*, xxv, 21.

³ Pantulu, 63. A similar type of tale is recorded in Parker, ii, 90 ff.

accuse him of committing the murder. This incident occurs in the first story of this Chapter. It will be found also in a Ho story where two fools, Hunchback and One-eyed, kill their mother by accident and take the body to a neighbour's brinjal-field and then denounce the man as the murderer. He is ready to pay a heavy bribe to the two brothers but they are so foolish that they will take nothing except a large loaf of bread for the funeral.¹ In a Santal tale a blacksmith whose wife is unfaithful to him with a prince murders the prince and places the body on the verandah of a merchant. The merchant is terrified that he will be suspected and calls in the blacksmith to help him out of his difficulty, which he refuses to do till he is heavily bribed.² In another Santal story, the hero finds his mother dead and carries her body to the roadside and waits until a herd of pack-bullocks come by. As they pass he accuses the drivers of having allowed their bullocks to trample his mother to death and they, in order to avoid the charge of murder, give him all their bullocks and merchandise.³ The motif is also found in an Uraon tale recorded by Hahn.⁴

4. The rogues in Story 1 go to visit an old woman and persuade her to keep her money in their charge on the ground that the Raja's officials are shortly coming to collect the taxes and will take from her everything she has. Story 9 has another confidence trick: Maha Thag deceives four lesser thieves into thinking he is an old friend and thus into a willingness to trust him with their money.

5. The villain, when his victim asks who he is, gives a name that when repeated later makes it sound as though something quite different had happened. For example, in Story 2, the villain says that his name is Wind. When he carries off the washerwoman's clothes and she reports it to the police and they say, 'Who has taken them?' she says, 'Wind has taken them', and the police laugh at her and say that if the wind has taken them, it is not for them to find them. The same villain later in the story tells the mother of the girl he wishes to abduct that his name is 'Her Husband' and when he achieves his purpose and the people ask the old woman who has carried off her daughter, she replies, 'Her Husband has taken her away', and they naturally ask her why she is making a fuss. This theme also occurs in a South I

¹ *J.B.O.R.S.*, i, 269.

² *Ibid.*, 205.

³ Bompas, 248.

⁴ Grignard, 48.

story in which a youth gets work under a woman who makes rice-cakes saying that his name is Last Year. He runs away with her cash-box and she cries, 'Last Year stole and took my box' and the people think her mad.¹ Parker records a similar tale from Ceylon in which the cheat calls himself 'Day Before Yesterday',² and there is an Uraon story where the villain gives his name as 'Yesternoon' and 'Son-in-law'.³

6. The rogue in Story 2 ingeniously cheats a merchant by hanging some clothes on the branches of a tree and telling him that it is a cloth-tree which as a result of his worship has already begun to bear fruit. The boy tells the merchant that he will sell him the tree but that care must be taken that a certain bird must never settle upon it; if it does no clothes will grow there. The merchant spends all his time driving the birds away but in the end when he finds no clothes appearing he comes to the conclusion that a bird must have sat on the branches after all and thus spoilt his bargain.

7. The same boy manages to steal a lot of clothes from a washerwoman by the simple means of telling her that there is a pile of bread under a tree some distance away; when she goes to get it he carries off the clothes. Similarly he persuades a Bairagi to leave his horse in his charge while he goes to get a present from a fictitious Raja who is supposed to be distributing clothes along the road.

8. In our third story the rogues who, it is interesting to note, are here called Thag,⁴ manage to get into a rich man's house and once inside one of them pretends to fall down dead and the other declares that he must stay by the body during the night and watch it. Once everyone is asleep they are able, of course, to remove what they want out of the building.

9. Story 4 is mainly concerned with a man who pretends to be so honest that he is upset even by finding some bits of grass sticking to his clothes, for this he says, represents a theft from the ground that the grass belonged to. His companion is so impressed by this that he willingly displays his treasure—and loses it.

10. A stranger ties his horse or bullock to a tethering-pole. The rogue claims the animal as his own on the ground

¹ Natesa Sastri, *Indian Antiquary*, xviii, 120.

² Parker, i, 75.

³ Grignard, 57.

⁴ I found the expression *Thag-makka*, or 'offspring of a Thag', still current as a term of abuse in Bastar in 1942. One branch of the Pardhan in Mandla was known as Son Thag until recently.

that the pole gives birth to offspring every year, and the neighbours, who are in the plot, support him. The stranger goes to court, and wins his case with the help of a clever jackal.¹

11. The custom of digging a hole through the wall in order to rob a house is one of the recognized methods adopted by the Indian thief, and there is a regular art of the subject which has been studied by Bloomfield. No fewer than seven different names are given to the shape of the breach in the wall such as 'Blown like a Lotus' or 'The Crescent Moon'. The instrument used for digging is the *phanimukha* or snake-mouth.² In one of Natesa Sastri's stories from South India, the thieves employ the implement called *kannakkol*, which is used for boring holes in the walls of buildings and is said by some to come from a thunder-bolt, as a means of divination.³

12. In several stories a youth achieves his purpose in this way: he climbs a tree and when some travellers camp below it he drops something upon them which frightens them away. He descends and removes their property. Sometimes it is a bullock's skin that is dropped. In a Ho tale a boy drops the entrails of a goat onto the uncovered body of a Raja who is lying below the tree and being massaged. His servants think that by some means their master's belly has burst open and they run for their lives.⁴ The boy descends and carries off their property.

13. We come now to a series of motifs which are not to be regarded as cheating in the ordinary sense, but are rather the means by which a clever boy defends himself against the machinations of his enemies. This was called by Clouston 'The Little Fairly Motif', which he derived from the name of an Irish legend describing the adventures of a small, clever boy who, among other ingenious tricks, skins a wretched old cow and puts a few shillings in the skin. He takes it to market and asks one hundred guineas as its price. When the people laugh at him, he beats the skin and out drops a shilling whereupon he explains that the skin has this particular magical property and is soon able to sell it at his own price to a greedy old farmer. Little Fairly's elder brother, hearing that he had got one hundred guineas for the skin of an old cow, forthwith kills his own cattle but when he takes them to market

¹ The motif is a common one: see Bompas, 49; *J.B.O.R.S.*, iv, 328; *J.B.O.R.S.*, xii, 562; Parker i, 228; Swynnerton, 142; Ramaswami Raju, 45; Gupta, 81; Grignard, 70.

² See Penzer, v, 142.

³ *Indian Antiquary*, xvii, 202 ff.

⁴ *J.B.O.R.S.*, ii, 301-2.

only receives a beating.¹ Almost exactly the same incident is repeated again and again in the Indian stories. It occurs more than once in this collection. In a Santal story Spanling kills an old buffalo and skins it, drops the skin at night from a tree onto a gang of thieves, gets the booty, borrows from his wicked uncles a wooden measure to measure it and returns the measure with one of the gold pieces sticking in a crack. When the uncles ask how he came to be measuring gold Spanling tells them that he has sold his buffalo skin for an enormous price and they kill their own buffaloes and take them for sale but are naturally greeted with derision.²

A variant is the cow or horse that is made to appear to be excreting rupees, a motif that occurs in many Indian tales,³ as well as in Irish, Icelandic, Latin and indeed throughout the European tradition.⁴

14. Generally the next incident in the sequence is that the uncles or neighbours of the hero get very angry and burn down his house or destroy his fields. He then loads the ashes into sacks and takes them to market. On the way some foolish traveller asks him what is in the sacks and the boy says that they are full of gold, that if anyone touches them or if, as in another tale, anyone breaks wind near by, the gold will all turn into ash. Presently, of course, the stranger breaks the taboo, the boy opens the sacks, shows nothing but ashes within and demands all the stranger's property in recompense. He then returns home and tells the neighbours that he has sold the ashes in the bazaar, whereupon they burn down their own houses or crops and take the ashes away for sale—with the natural result that they are laughed out of the market.

15. The next trick, which generally follows almost automatically, is that the neighbours or brothers tie this too clever boy up in a sack and throw him into a river, in order to destroy him finally. He floats down the stream and presently is pulled out by a cowherd who is tending his herd on the bank. On being released he abuses the cowherd, saying that he was on his way to Bhagavan to get a great treasure and now his pilgrimage has been ruined. The cowherd begs to be allowed to take his place and promises to give his cattle in return for the privilege. The boy ties him up, throws him

¹ Clouston, ii, 229 ff.

² Bompas, 189 ff. Cf. *J.B.O.R.S.*, i, 264.

³ Bompas, 205; *Indian Antiquary*, xviii, 120 (Tamil version); *ibid.*, ii (Bengali version); Swynnerton, 109; Parker, iii, 150.

⁴ Clouston, ii, 249 ff.

into the river and returns home with the property. He tells the jealous neighbours or relatives that he has been to Bhagavan who has given him all this wealth and they, determined not in any way to be behindhand, tie themselves up in sacks, fall into the river and are destroyed.¹

16. A variant of these tricks is seen in Story 9 of this collection. Maha Thag gets a lot of fish on the day his brothers are coming to see him. He tells his wife to hide the fish and then takes two of his visitors down to the river. He sits on the river bank pulling his hook in and out of the water. When they reach home he brings out the cooking-pot full of fish and says that he has filled it magically by his antics down by the river. The brothers, who had come to take their sister home, decide to take the magic fishing-rod and hook instead. In a Santal story, Single-Trick cheats Seven-Tricks in the same way.²

17. More common is the incident of the pretended restoration to life. When Maha Thag's brothers come back again very angry he beats his wife and she falls down pretending to be dead whereupon he takes a small stick and puts it into her nostrils and she yawns twice and gets up. The brothers decide to take the magic stick instead of the girl. They go home and beat their own wives to death, but, of course, the stick proves useless. In a Bengal tale, a farmer, threatened by a group of men, beats his wife with a bullock-goad, crying, 'Be changed into a girl'. She runs away and sends her little daughter back. The men buy the stick and kill their wives with it.³ A similar South Indian tale describes how a cheat dresses his wife as an old woman, beats her, and makes her young again.⁴

18. A similar theme is that of the boy who manages to sell a magic sickle. This boy goes to a farmer's field and by working very hard reaps a large part of it in half a day. When the farmer comes along and asks him why he is doing this, he says the sickle did it of its own accord. 'I simply put it on the ground and it did everything.' The farmer, anxious to possess himself of so useful an implement, gives the boy a good price and takes it away in triumph.

¹ Tricks 13, 14 and 15 are very common. See Damant, *Indian Antiquary*, iii, 11; Cole, *Indian Antiquary*, iv, 257; Parker, i, 166; Bompas, 190 and 204; J.B.O.R.S., i, 264, and ii, 302.

For a most interesting account of the distribution of similar tales in Europe, see Clouston ii, 231-251.

² Damant, *Indian Antiquary*, iii, 11.

³ Bompas, 243.

⁴ Natesa Sastri, *Indian Antiquary*, xviii, 120. See also Bompas, 242.

TWO CLEVER CHEATS

A Muria story from Sidhawand, Bastar State

A Rawat and a Lohar were friends. At the time of the New Rice festival, the Lohar asked the Rawat for some ghee. The Rawat filled a pot with cowdung and poured a little ghee on the top, and gave it to his friend. When the Lohar began to use the ghee, he found that the pot was full of cowdung, and was very angry. But he said nothing, and after a few days the Rawat came to the smithy asking for a sword. The Lohar made it of wood and covered it with a little iron. When the Rawat went to the jungle, the sword broke at the first blow. Then the two friends thought, 'It will be a good thing if we go out together to cheat the world instead of one another.' So they set out and in due time reached a certain city.

Here they found a Brahmin woman weeping for her dead son and crying that no one would carry the body to burial. They said they would bury the child for five rupees. The Brahmin woman agreed, and they carried out the body. There was a Marar, who was sitting in his garden throwing stones across it to prevent anyone coming in to steal. The friends dropped the body and ran shouting towards the Marar, saying, 'You have killed our son; now we are going to report you to the police.' The Marar gave them a hundred rupees to keep quiet, and they buried the child.

They went to another city and found an old woman with two buffaloes. They said to her, 'Old mother, we're going to live with you and look after you.' She was very pleased, and told one to plough with the buffaloes and gave the other a pot full of holes. 'In this', she said, 'you must spend your time fetching water.' But the buffaloes spent the day wandering in the fields, and the water always flowed out of the broken pot. Next day the friends said to the old woman, 'Mother, today we are going to the court to hear what is going on.' In the evening they came hurrying back and said, 'Mother, give us your money and we'll hide it for you. The Raja is going to collect all the money in his kingdom, and unless we save it you will lose all you have.' But

the old woman filled a basket with white stones and gave it to them saying, 'Here is my money, sons; take it and hide it for me.' The friends took it, and in the night hid the basket in a well, thinking that when the time came for their return they would take it with them. Then they went away to another city.

Here they dressed themselves as Joshi Brahmins; in one house they read the palms of people's hands—and took money; in another they prepared horoscopes—and took money; in another they made love charms—and took more money. Then they returned to the well near the old woman's house to fetch the basket. The Lohar said, 'Tie a rope round my neck and lower me into the well. I will get the money and then you can pull it up.' When the Lohar opened the basket he saw there was nothing but stones, so he tipped them out and sat in the basket himself and called to his friend to pull him up. When the basket came up, the Rawat did not open it, but put it on his head and went off, leaving his friend to die—as he thought—in the well.

After he had gone some way he felt hungry and went to a widow's house to beg for some food. After he had eaten he hastened on and at last reached his home. There were his wife and child and they received him with joy and prepared a fine feast. They divided the food into three exact portions. The Lohar thought, 'If I don't make a noise, they will finish all the food, and I'll die of hunger.' So he cried from inside the basket, 'Make a share for me! Make a share for me!' When they heard this the family were frightened and about to run away, but the Rawat took a stick and standing as far away as he could pushed the lid off the basket. The Lohar jumped out and the two then began to quarrel. The Lohar cried, 'Your name may be Jag Thag, but my name is Maha Thag. For I have deceived everyone.'

Then the two friends divided the five rupees and the hundred rupees that they had got, and the Lohar returned to his home.

2

THE COWRIE MARRIAGE

A Raja-Muria story from Usribeda, Bastar State

In a certain village a mother and son were living. The mother used to go out daily to work in the neighbours' houses, but the boy never did any work. At last one day the mother said, 'All the other boys in the village do some work, but you do nothing; you can't get enough to eat by just sitting still all day. At least go and earn a few cowries so that I can get you married.'

When the boy heard this he said, 'Mother, if I get some cowries, will you really marry me?' She said, 'Certainly I will.' So the boy took a spade and went to dig in the village rubbish-heap. At last he found one broken cowrie and brought it home in triumph, saying, 'Look, mother, here's a cowrie; where is my wife?' But his mother said, 'You can't get married on one cowrie, child; at least get two more.' The boy went back to the rubbish-heap and found another cowrie. Now he had two, but his mother still said, 'There must be some more; you can't get married on less than five cowries.'

A third time the boy went to the rubbish-heap, and this time he found three more: now he had five cowries, and he ran home to his mother in great excitement. But his mother said, 'Son, how can I get you married on cowries? Get five more and then we will certainly have the marriage.' But the boy said to himself, 'This old woman will always go on deceiving me: I'm not going to go on living with her any longer.' And he tied the five cowries in his dhoti and went away.

On the way, he thought, 'Now here I've got five cowries, I'll be able to do something now.' He sat down and made a basket with leaves, and put a lot of small pebbles inside it. Then he made a very small hole in the top of the basket, and put the five cowries there so that you could see nothing but cowries in the basket. He put the basket on his head and went along the road towards the bazaar.

Presently he saw a Pannarin carrying a big basket full of bo-bo bread to sell in the bazaar. When she saw the boy she said, 'What's that in your basket?' The boy said, 'It's full of cowries.' 'What

are you going to do with them?' 'They are my mother's savings, and she has sent me to the bazaar to buy a lot of bo-bo bread for my marriage.' The Pannarin said, 'But I am going to the bazaar for cowries; that's why I'm carrying all this bo-bo bread. Let's change baskets, then you'll have the bread and I'll have the cowries.' The boy said, 'No, you'll deceive me. My mother said that with these cowries I could get enough bread for two men to carry. But you've only got one man's load.' But she said, 'No, there's a lot here.' So at last the boy put his basket on the woman's head and he took hers and they parted.

The boy was very pleased at getting all this bread and made off as fast as he could. When the Pannarin got home she called to her husband, 'Come quickly, I've got a big basket full of cowries.' He left his plough and opening the basket tipped all the pebbles out onto the floor. Then that man beat his wife for a long time and sent her to find the boy.

The Pannarin went weeping to find the boy. But he had gone a long way ahead. Soon he came to a lake where the Raja's washerwoman had taken a lot of clothes to wash. She had a little boy with her who was sitting on the bank watching. When the boy with the basket of bo-bo bread came there he threw a lot of the bread under a tree. He approached the washerwoman's child, showing him bits of bread and then eating them until the child began to cry. When the washerwoman saw what was going on, she said, 'Give my little boy some bread to eat.'

But the boy said, 'No, I'm hungry, how can I give any to your child. But under the tree over there I saw a lot of bread. Go and get some from there.' She said, 'How far is it?' 'O it's just along the road.' The washerwoman picked up her child and went along the road to find the bread. The boy at once picked up the best of the clothes and ran off as fast as he could go.

The washerwoman sat down under the tree and began to feed her son with the bread and eat some herself. When at last she went back to the lake she found all the best clothes were gone. Now that woman had first asked the boy his name, and he had replied, 'My name is Wind.' When she went weeping to report the matter to the police, she said, 'O Mahapurub, Wind has carried off all my clothes.' The police asked, 'Who has taken them?' She said again,

'Wind has taken them.' The policeman laughed and said, 'If wind has stolen them, it's not for us to find them.'

The boy went on with the big bundle of clothes on his head till he came to a great jungle. By the road was a cotton tree, and the boy tied the clothes to its branches, one to each branch. He made a mud platform at the foot of the tree and offered incense, leaves and flowers.

After some time a merchant came that way. He was going with a lot of money to buy clothes for his son's marriage. When he saw the boy, the merchant asked him what he was doing. The boy said, 'This is a cloth tree. I am a poor man and I want to get married. So I am worshipping this tree and the result of my worship is that it has already begun to bear fruit.' And he pointed to the clothes hanging from the branches. The merchant asked, 'How long is it before your marriage?' The boy answered, 'Tell me first, how long is it to your son's marriage?' The merchant said, 'Six months. Why not give me the clothes that are growing on this tree, and I'll give you all the money I have. Then I need not go any further.' But the boy said, 'Your son's marriage is not for six months; mine is now. How can I sell you these clothes? I can't give you the clothes, but I can sell you the tree. I will pick the clothes, and new ones will grow on it in time for your son's marriage.' The merchant said, 'Very well.'

The boy took the clothes from the tree and tied them in a bundle. He took the merchant's money and showed him how to offer leaves and flowers to the tree. He said, 'This is a great loss to me, but for the sake of your son I am doing it. Don't give this tree to anyone else, and don't let a rambi bird sit on any of the trees near by. If one sits all will be lost. First the tree will flower, then the clothes will begin to grow.' So saying, the boy went off with the clothes and the rupees.

The merchant sat below the tree. Soon he saw a rambi bird and ran to drive it away. Then he had to go to and fro driving the birds away. In the evening he offered incense and leaves and flowers at the foot of the tree. After some days the tree flowered, and the merchant was pleased. 'I'll soon get my clothes,' he thought. After a few days more, the fruit appeared and then the cotton pods broke open and away the cotton flew into the air. When the merchant saw it he was very disappointed. 'A rambi

bird must have sat on one of these trees without my seeing it,' he thought. 'For there goes all the cotton of the clothes flying away into the air.' And he went home.

As the boy went on his way, he met a Bairagi on a horse. He said, 'Where did you get all that cloth?' The boy said, 'O Bairagi, five miles back there is a Raja, and he is giving lots and lots of cloth to all the poor people that come there. That's where I got it.' The Bairagi said, 'Then I must go there too. And where will you stay tonight?' The boy said, 'I am very tired: I will stay by yonder lake.' The Bairagi said, 'Then I'll leave this horse with you; look after it for me, while I go to get a present from the Raja. He might not give anything to a man with a horse.' The boy said, 'Certainly. I'll wait by the lake till you return.'

The boy let the Bairagi get well on his way, and then he himself mounted the horse and made off as quickly as possible. After some time he came to the banks of a great river. Here he built himself a little hut.

The Bairagi went five miles, he went ten miles, but there was no Raja. He came back, but there was no horse. He searched everywhere, but could find nothing.

The boy built himself a very good little boat, and used to ferry people across the river. One day, many people went to the bazaar. After that there was a great storm and the river came down in flood. For fear of the flood everyone came back quickly from the bazaar. The boy ferried them across the river. Last of all came an old woman and her daughter, a most beautiful girl. They shouted across to the boy to come and fetch them. When he saw the girl, he put his things into the boat, and went across to fetch the old woman and her daughter. He said to the old woman, 'I can't take you both at one time. I'll take you first and then I'll come back for your daughter.' So the boy took the old woman over first. She asked him what was his name. He said, 'My name is Her Husband.' She said, 'Bring the girl quickly, and I'll give a pice or two more.'

But when the boy had got the girl safely into the boat, he turned it round and began to go down stream. The old woman screamed and wept on the bank, but the boy answered, 'I can't do anything, the river is carrying us away.' After they had gone a long way, the boy brought the boat to the bank and took his

things and the horse and the girl to shore, and they stayed there for two or four days.

The old woman went weeping to the police, and made a report. 'I had a daughter and Her Husband has carried her away.' The policeman said, 'Who did you say took her away?' 'Her Husband took her.' The policeman laughed and said, 'If her husband took her away, what can we do?' And he sent her home.

After two or four days, the boy put the girl and his things on the horse and they rode away to his home. When his mother saw him she could not recognize him, but he told her all that had happened. She was very proud of his cleverness and said, 'Now we must have the marriage.' The boy and the girl were married and the three of them lived together in great happiness.

3

THE CLEVER PARDHAN

A Pardhan story from Jhanki, Mandla District

An old Pardhan and his wife went to beg in a certain town. Gradually they collected a lot of money by begging. They had no children and so they went to a temple and gave their savings to the Sadhus.

One day to her surprise the old woman found that she was pregnant and after ten months a son was born to her. As the son fell to the ground he cried, 'You will be greatly blessed', and died. Next year a daughter was born and gradually twelve sons and twelve daughters were born, but the parents had given away all their money and therefore they could not marry their children. They had not even enough to eat.

The eldest son went to another town to beg, the youngest son stayed with his parents and the others wandered starving from place to place. At last the youngest boy said to himself, 'I must do something to get food', so he dressed himself as a cowherd, put cowdung and water in an earthen pot, spread curds on the top and took it to the bazaar to sell. The eldest son also put rice-water in a pot and poured a little ghee on the top and took it to the same bazaar. The youngest boy went to and fro crying, 'Buy

my curds'; the eldest son went to and fro crying, 'Buy my ghee.' When people wanted to buy a little, they refused. They said they must sell the whole pot or nothing. In the end the youngest son got five rupees for his pot of curds; and the eldest son got ten rupees for his pot of ghee. They bought food and clothes and each went to his own home in high glee. When the people, however, found that they had been tricked they tried to find them but without success.

Another time the youngest son made bangles of iron and covered them with a little silver. The eldest son made pots of brass and coloured them to look like gold. They went again to the bazaar and met but did not recognize each other. The eldest boy offered to exchange his pots for the youngest boy's bangles, thinking that the bangles were really silver. The youngest boy thought that the pots were really gold and agreed to the arrangement. Then they went on to sell their new wares in the very place where they had previously tricked the people to buy the ghee and curds.

The youngest brother thought it would be suspicious if he sold so many gold pots at once and he cut them up and found they were only brass. The eldest brother also examined the bangles and found that they were iron. They were both very angry and caught each other and were about to fight when they realized that they were brothers. Then they laughed for half a day and said, 'We are really Thag.' The eldest boy was called 'Maha Thag' and the youngest was called 'Chhota Thag.' Maha Thag said, 'I will pretend to be dumb and you be deaf.' Maha Thag tied rags on his feet and blackened his face with coal. Chhota Thag made his eyes dirty with cowdung and tore his clothes. They went together to a Seth's house to beg. In that house the key of the inner room, where the money was kept, was hung on a pillar in the courtyard. When the two Pardhan brothers reached the house they began to dance. The Seth was very pleased with their dances and Maha Thag who was pretending to be dumb made signs that he wanted to go inside while Chhota Thag said, 'We must dance inside the house so that your womenfolk can see it.' So the Seth took them inside the house and they danced before the women. In the middle of the dance Maha Thag fell down and his brother cried, 'He is dead: someone has poisoned him.' The Seth was frightened and asked Chhota

Thag to stay by the body. The elder brother did not even breathe and Chhota Thag sat by him weeping loudly.

Evening came and the doors of the house were shut. The inner room was locked and the key was hung in the middle of the court. When everyone was asleep the brothers got up and took the key. They found a box of gold in the inner room and took it away to the jungle. There they broke the box open with stones and carried the money home. With this money they were all able to get married but they spent so much on the marriages that they were soon poor again. Then they made fiddles and went about playing and singing and in this way made a scanty living.

4

MONEY FROM THE TEA GARDENS

A Gond story from Korba Zamindari

There were two poor men in a village who went out to work daily as labourers in their neighbours' fields. They only got enough to fill their bellies. There was not one pice left over. One day they said to each other, 'Daily we earn our money and daily we eat it up. Let us go to the Tea Gardens and get ten annas a day.' So saying they went away, leaving their children and wives behind.

In the Tea Gardens they each earned twelve annas a day, and they remained there for a whole year. The first man spent all his money on opium and ganja; the second spent two annas a day on food and saved ten annas. So at the end of the year he had two hundred rupees, though his friend had not a pie. Then said the second man, 'Let us go home and see our children.' But the first man said, 'I have not got a pie. How can I go?' But his friend said, 'I've got plenty of money and I will give you twenty rupees so that you can come with me, for I don't want to go without you.'

As they came near their village on their way home they separated and planned to say that the reason why the man who took opium was without money was because he had been robbed. When he got home the neighbours ran to see him expecting him

to give them a great feast with the fortune he had made, but he wept saying that thieves had stolen all he had.

The other man tied his money in a bundle and put it on his head and went on alone. Presently he met a thief sitting by the roadside and smoking a pipe. The thief said, 'Where are you going, brother?' The man replied that he was on his way home from the Tea Gardens. The thief asked him to have some tobacco and they both went on along the road together. Now there was some spear-grass sticking to the thief's clothes, and when he saw it he pretended to be very upset, saying, 'How did this grass get on my clothes? I must take it back to the place where it came from, or I shall have stolen it from the ground it belonged to.' So he went back along the road and when he was out of sight he threw the grass away. The other sat waiting for him and thinking what a good man he had met—just the sort of man whom he could trust with all his secrets. 'Why did you go to return the grass?' 'I am a Sadhu', said the thief, 'and my name is Tirindari. I never take anything from anywhere or anyone.' When he heard that, the man from the Tea Gardens showed the thief his rupees and when night fell they lay down together to sleep. During the night the thief took the rupees and ran away.

When the man awoke in the morning and discovered his loss he wept bitterly. As he went along the road he came to a cotton tree where every night thousands of birds used to sleep. There was a kite which had covered its claws and beak with cotton. When the man saw it he thought that the bird had got wings on its feet. The bird said to him, 'I am not a bird, I am a Sadhu, and my name is Sikchari and my nature is to help everybody.' The man lay down to sleep under the tree, thinking how fortunate he was to see such a holy bird. But at night when the little birds came to sleep the kite ate them all.

When the man awoke in the morning there was not a single bird left, and he got up and danced singing :

'First I saw Tirindari;
He stole my hundred rupees.
Then I saw Sikchari;
He ate a hundred birds.'

At last the man came to a great city and he went down the road

singing this song. The Raja thought he was mad and shut him up in prison. Now one day the Raja and the Rani were sitting together in their garden and the Raja picked a flower and threw it at her, but she was angry and wept. That night she secretly put food of every kind in a dish and took it to a lame Ghasia who used to sit begging outside the jail. The Ghasia said, 'Why are you so late? I am not going to eat anything', and he beat the Rani with his stick. But she only laughed and after the Ghasia had eaten his food the Rani slept with him for half the night and went home.

Then the man in the jail began to sing a new song:

'First I saw Tirindari;
He stole my hundred rupees.
Then I saw Sikchari;
He ate a hundred birds.
The Rani wept when the flower struck her,
And she got a beating with the Ghasia's stick.'

When the Raja heard about it, he called the man to come to him and when he had heard his story he was very pleased, and gave him his own weight in rupees.

5

THE STUPID BANIA

A Khuntia Chokh story from Dhumarkachar, Lapha Zamindari

A Bania was riding on his horse to do business in a town which was famous for its Thag who always deceived everyone. On the way, he met a jackal in the bottom of a stream: it was trying to reach a dead calf. The jackal cried, 'O Bania, I want to eat this calf but I cannot reach it. Please throw it down to me.' The Bania said, 'You rascally jackal, do you think I would touch a dead calf?' But the jackal said, 'Help me today and one day I will help you.' Hearing this, the Bania threw the calf down to it and went on his way.

When the Bania reached the city of the Thag he was met by a Teli who invited him to stay in his house. There was a wooden pole outside and the Teli told the Bania to tie his horse to this

pole and then come in and rest. The next morning the Teli got up early and went to the horse and stroked its back saying, 'Well, my wooden pole, every year you bless me with a baby mare, this year you have given me a baby horse', and he untied it and was taking it away.

The Bania seeing this, cried, 'What are you doing with my horse?' The Teli answered, 'This is not your horse; everybody knows that my wooden pole gives birth to a horse every year and this horse is its child.' The Bania cried, 'It is my horse, I came riding on it yesterday.' The Teli said, 'Did anybody see you arriving on the horse?' 'The whole city saw me', answered the Bania and he called the neighbours to bear witness to his horse. But everyone said, 'No, you came here on foot; this horse has just been born from the Teli's wooden pole.'

Full of rage, the Bania went to the court. The Teli called witnesses to prove that his wooden pole had given birth to a horse during the night. Everybody declared that the Bania had come there on foot. The magistrate said to the Bania, 'Haven't you got any witnesses at all?' 'Yes, I have one witness and I will fetch him.' So the Bania called the jackal. When the jackal came, it said, 'I will go to sleep in the court; when they shout for me, don't wake me up.' The Bania said to the magistrate, 'My witness has come, please call him.' The chaprasi shouted, 'Kolu Ram, Kolu Ram', but the jackal did not reply. Then the Teli kicked it and said, 'How dare you sleep in the court?' The jackal woke up and stretched itself and yawned; and the magistrate said, 'Didn't you sleep last night?' The jackal answered, 'Last night there was a great fire in the lake, and all the fish were burnt in the blazing water. I spent the whole night eating them.' The magistrate said, 'Why do you talk nonsense? How can water catch fire?' But the jackal replied, 'Does not the magistrate also talk nonsense, for how can a horse be born from a wooden pole?'

When the magistrate heard that, he came to his senses and said, 'The jackal is right.' He ordered his chaprasi to beat the Teli and gave the horse back to the Bania.

6

THE SEVEN THIEVES

An Ojha story from Dongrigura, Bastar State

In Seoni City was a Raja with an only son. To find a bride for his son, the Raja went to Vijayanagar. When the wedding procession came riding on elephants to his house, seven thieves came also. When the thieves saw so great a crowd of people, they hid by the roadside. When the procession had passed the thieves were seized with lust for the new bride and said to each other, 'If we could only kidnap her, how happy we would be!'

The eldest brother said, 'Whatever we desire, that we can do.' The following day they went to the Raja's Palace to steal the girl. They made a hole through the wall and finding the girl asleep, picked up the bed on which she was lying and carried her away.

On the road by which they were going was a large banyan tree overhanging the way. As they passed beneath it, the branches brushed the face of the girl and she awoke. When she realized what was happening, she caught hold of the branches of the tree and pulled herself up into them. The thieves went on, ignorant of what had happened, and the girl ran home to the Palace.

When the thieves got to the heart of the jungle and put down their burden, they saw that the girl had disappeared. 'Well,' said the eldest, 'she has run away, but tomorrow we will see.' The following night they returned to the Palace and again stole the girl asleep on her bed and carried her to their house. They said, 'Well, you escaped us once, but now you've got to stay here. Otherwise we'll kill you.'

The next day they began to discuss which of the brothers the girl should marry. The youngest brother said, 'Let's give her to the eldest; then we can all call her bhaui, and laugh and flirt with her. If I marry her, then you will all have to avoid her as your younger sister-in-law!' So the eldest brother married her with turmeric water and a ring. And some days passed.

Presently the seven brothers said, 'We are wasting time sitting here. Let us go and do something.' They said to the girl, 'Look here, we are going to earn our living. You stay here with our

mother and look after her. And never once go out of the house.' So saying the seven brothers went away.

The girl said to herself, 'I have fallen into the trap of the thieves; how am I to escape?' One day she said to her mother-in-law, 'Your sons told me to look after you. I must give you a bath now, or when they return and find you dirty they'll beat me.' So the old woman sat on a stone and removed her clothes. The girl brought two pots of boiling water and poured them over her, and all the old woman's skin came off. The girl picked up the old woman and laid her down on a cot, covering her with blankets.

Then she thought, 'If I go away as a woman, they'll catch me and kill me. I must dress as a man.' She found men's clothes and dressed in them, tying a turban on her head, and mounted a horse with docked tail, and took an umbrella in her hand. So she rode away. Everyone who saw her thought some officer was on tour.

After a time, the seven thieves came along the same road, and saw the girl far off. They said to each other, 'Here comes the police inspector', and they quickly hid themselves. But when the girl came nearer, one of the brothers said, 'Brothers, this man is wearing my clothes.' The others said, 'Keep quiet, you fool.' But another brother said, 'But that's my umbrella.' And a third said, 'That's my horse.' The eldest brother said, 'Nonsense, there are many such umbrellas and such horses.' So they remained in their hiding-place and the girl passed by.

At last the girl got back safe to the Palace, and the thieves returned to their house. They shouted for the girl, but she was gone. Then they looked for their mother, and found her lying skinless under the blankets. Then they said to one another, 'It was her, it was our horse and clothes and umbrella. Well, as she skinned our old mother, we will skin her.' And they went without delay to the Palace to catch the girl and bring her back.

But the girl thought, 'They came once, they came twice, they will certainly come again.' So she sat by the hole in the wall through which they had come, holding a sword in her hand. Now the hole was narrow and only one could enter at a time. When the first came in, the girl cut off his head, and pulled his body aside. Then she cut off the head of the second and pulled his body aside. And so for each of the seven thieves.

At that time the Kotwar was going on his rounds, and when the girl saw him she called, 'Come here, Kotwar, here is some fellow who has died. Take him away and I'll give you a hundred rupees.' She only showed him one of the corpses. The Kotwar took it away and threw it in a ditch. When he returned for his reward, the girl said, 'Where did you throw the body, you fool? Look it has come back again.' And she showed him the second corpse. 'Take it away again, and this time take it far off.'

When the Kotwar returned, she again abused him. 'Look, it has come back again.' And she showed him the third corpse. In this way she made him take away six of the bodies.

When the Kotwar was about to carry away the seventh body, the girl said, 'If this one comes back I'll not give you the hundred rupees. Throw it somewhere where it will never escape.' The Kotwar said, 'I know the very place.'

It was now dawn, and the Kotwar took the body to throw it into the pit where the potter got his earth. Now the potter was a busy man and had got up early and gone down into his pit to dig for earth. When the Kotwar threw the corpse into the pit, it fell on top of the potter who shouted with fear. The Kotwar thought that the corpse had come back to life and would chase him and kill him. So he ran away as fast as he could and hid in his house. Nor did he ever go to the Palace to ask for the hundred rupees from the Raja's daughter-in-law.

So she now lived happily with her husband.

7

THE CLEVER AGARIA

An Agaria story from Pungaon, near Mawai, Mandla District

A Baiga woman had an only son. When the boy grew up he said to his mother, 'All the others go to the jungle to cut their bewar. I want to do the same. Please go to uncle Logundi and get him to make me an axe twelve maunds in weight.' The mother went to Logundi Raja's smithy and arranged for the axe to be made. After some days the boy went to fetch it. Logundi Raja said, 'Sit down, my nephew, drink your pej. Then you may take your axe home.' When the boy had drunk his pej he took the

axe and was able to cut thousands of trees with it at a single blow.

In his bewar there was a cotton tree and in that tree there lived a Dano. As the boy raised his axe to cut down the tree the Dano cried, 'If you do that, you will cut off my hands and my feet. If you don't cut me I will give you many rupees.' The boy let the tree alone and the Dano gave him many rupees. When the boy got home he asked his mother to go to the Raja and borrow a kuro-measure. That Raja was a Gond who had married a Baiga girl. He lent the old woman a measure which had some gum in it and when they had measured the money one rupee stuck to the bottom. The mother returned it to the Raja and his wife looked into it and saw the rupee. 'These people', she cried, 'used to be naked as cows. Now they are measuring their rupees, they've got so many. Let's kill them and take their money.'

The Raja tied the boy up in a sack and threw it into a river. As it floated down, a Lamana saw it and pulled it out. But the boy cursed him. 'I was on my way to Bhagavan and you have stopped me.' The Lamana said, 'Tie me up and send me to Bhagavan instead of you.' 'If I do, what will you give me?' 'You can have all my bullocks,' said the Lamana. So the boy tied up the Lamana and threw him into the river and went home with his herd of bullocks.

When the Raja saw him he was very surprised and said, 'How did you get these bullocks?' 'You tied me up in an empty sack,' answered the boy, 'and I went down to the bottom of the river and found all this wealth.' The Raja was very excited on hearing this and said, 'Tie me up and my children in sacks and throw us into the river so that we too can become rich.' The boy did as he asked, and the Raja and his children were drowned.

After a few days a man came to the boy's house asking for work. The boy asked him what he could do. The man said, 'My name is Pandukbi, and I can do something that no one else can do. I can go under the water and bring things up from the bottom of the river.' So the boy kept him as his servant.

One day, while the boy was walking along the road, he met a Dano which at once attacked him and tried to eat him. The boy was about to kill the Dano with his axe when it said, 'Spare my life and I will take you to Bhagavan.' When the boy came into

Bhagavan's presence he said, 'Well, Bhagavan, Ram Ram.' Bhagavan said, 'When other people come here they fall at my feet but you—.' The boy said, 'I will cut you up with my axe if you're not careful.' 'What is the matter with you?' asked Bhagavan. 'I haven't got a wife, that is what's the matter with me; why don't you give me one?' 'Go your way,' said Bhagavan, 'and you will meet a wife before you reach home.'

It turned out as Bhagavan had said. On the way the boy met a most beautiful girl and he took her home and married her. He was so pleased at being married that he said to Pandukbi, 'Go into the river and bring me the Raja and his children.' Pandukbi went under the water and brought the bones onto dry land. The boy sent life back into the bones and the Raja and his children became his servants. But they forgot all about the poor Lamana.

8

A CLEVER CHEAT

An Agaria story from Rewa State

Four thieves laden with stolen rupees were sitting smoking under a tree. Along the road came Maha Thag. When he saw the thieves he ran to greet them crying, 'My friends, it is many days since we met. But today my wife told me you were coming and I have run from my house to welcome you. How happy I am today at seeing you all again! Come with me, you must sleep in my house and my wife will cook your food.' The thieves could not remember that they had ever seen Maha Thag before and felt ashamed that they had forgotten such a man. They went along to his house and Maha Thag's wife came running out with water to wash their feet. 'My friends', she cried, 'you have forgotten us, but we have not forgotten you. Today it is a festival in our house because you have come here again.' Then they both flattered the thieves and praised them pretending that they were old friends until they had persuaded them to put all the rupees for safety in the house. During the night Maha Thag buried the money in the garden. In the morning when the thieves asked him to return the money he shook his head and said, 'My friends, I don't under-

stand you. You never gave me any money. Are you now trying to deceive me?' Maha Thag's wife said the same and told them to search the whole house and take the money if they could find it. The thieves searched everywhere but they could find nothing. They were afraid to go to the police and at last had to go away, half doubting whether they ever had had any money at all.

Another day Maha Thag's bullock died. He skinned it and put the skin in the sun to dry. When it was ready he covered himself with it and hid himself by the roadside. Presently the four thieves came again and sat down to smoke. Maha Thag came out on all fours covered with the bullock's skin and cried, 'O thieves, the police are coming!' The four men hearing, as they thought, a bullock talking to them were terrified and ran away leaving their money behind. Maha Thag threw the skin away and went home with the money.

Maha Thag wanted to measure the rupees and went to a very rich Gond in his village to borrow a kuro-measure. After he had measured the rupees he stuck one of them to the bottom of the measure with a little cowdung. When the Gond saw it he said to himself, 'This man has got a great many rupees for one bullock's skin. I will kill my bullocks and sell the skins and make a lot of money too.' But when he took the skins to market he only got a few annas for them.

The Gond came home and told the villagers how Maha Thag had deceived him. It was the time of the oil-seed harvest. The Gond were very angry with Maha Thag and set fire to his crop. Maha Thag did not mind, for he saw how he could turn it to account. He gathered the ashes together and putting them into sacks loaded them onto bullocks and took them to sell in the bazaar. On the way he rested, piling the sacks on the ground. A Lamana came by and said to him, 'What is in those sacks?' Maha Thag looked this way and that way and whispered, 'Brother, it is all gold.' The Lamana was excited at this and sat down with his back against the sacks. Maha Thag said, 'Don't sit like that, for this is magic gold and if anyone touches it, it will turn to ashes.' 'Impossible', said the Lamana. 'Very well,' said the Maha Thag; 'if it is turned to ashes what will you give me?' 'I will give you all my cattle,' said the Lamana. For a time they sat smoking together and then the Lamana got up to go. 'Wait', said Maha Thag. 'I

must look at my gold to see if it has turned to ashes or not.' They opened the sacks and, of course, they were full of ashes, and the Lamana had to give all his bullocks.

When Maha Thag returned to the village with the bullocks, the Gond thought to themselves, 'This is the way to make money', and they set fire to their fields and carried the ashes in sacks to the bazaar, but everybody laughed at them and they came back angry to the village. They were so angry that they killed Maha Thag and he deceived them no more.

9

THE POWER OF DECEIT

A Pardhan story from Rewa State

Maha Thag was riding along the road when he saw in the distance the seven Jaga Thag brothers with their sister. He turned round and put the reins round his horse's tail and sat facing its buttocks. Now he had many ornaments in his ears and round his neck. When the seven Jaga Thag brothers saw him, they said, 'Here is a fool; let us take his ornaments.' They pulled him off the horse and robbed him of all he had and said, 'We have taken your things: you can take ours.' Maha Thag said, 'The only thing I want is your sister.' The brothers said, 'Take her as your wife.' But when they went home, their wives abused them for giving away their sister and sent them to bring her back.

Now Maha Thag had bought a lot of fish. He put them in a pot and said to the girl, 'Here come your brothers, but don't go out to meet them; stay in the house quietly cooking.' When the brothers arrived, Maha Thag asked two of them to go fishing with him. He took his rod and sat by the river bank pulling the hook in and out of the water and saying, 'O fish, fill my cooking-pot!' When they reached home, Maha Thag went into the house and brought out the cooking-pot full of fish. The brothers whispered to one another, 'See how this fellow catches fish by his magic. Let us take his magic fishing-rod and hook instead of our sister.'

When they reached home, they went down to the nearest river to fish, but they got nothing and their wives abused them again

and sent them back to bring their sister. This time Maha Thag said to his wife, 'Here come your brothers again. Don't bring any water to wash their feet. I will pretend to be angry with you and beat you and you fall down as if you were dead.' So when the brothers came, the girl stayed in the house and Maha Thag pretended to be very angry and dragged her out. He beat her with a stick till she fell down holding her breath and pretending to be dead. Then Maha Thag took a small stick and put it into her nostrils, and she yawned twice and got up. Seeing this, the brothers whispered to each other, 'See how this fellow can bring the dead back to life by his magic. Let us take the stick instead of the girl.'

When they reached home their wives abused the brothers. So the seven Jaga Thag beat them until they died. They put the stick into their nostrils but nothing happened. This time they were very angry and when they had caught Maha Thag they put him in a sack and threw him into the river. As he floated down in the water a cowherd pulled him out, but Maha Thag said, 'You fool, why did you pull me out? I was catching fish in my magic sack.' The cowherd said, 'I will give you all my cows if you put me in your magic sack and throw me into the river.'

When Maha Thag came home with a great herd of cows, the seven brothers thought, 'Let us throw ourselves into the river in sacks and we too will get hundreds of cows.' So they did and were drowned and Maha Thag took their property.

10

THE LUCKY BOY

A Muria story from Esalnar, Bastar State

A Muria widow and her little son used to earn their livelihood by grazing cattle. One year when the crops had failed, the villagers went to cut a dippa clearing. The little boy seeing them go begged his mother to give him an axe. 'Son, we have no money for food, how can I give you an axe?' Then the boy went to his uncle, who was a wealthy man with much grain and cattle, and asked him for an axe, but his uncle drove him out of the house:

'Boy, don't come begging to me.' The boy went weeping to his mother and told her what had happened. Later in the day he went round the village to try to find an old axe and at last discovered on a heap of rubbish a broken, rusty knife. When he found this he ran in great excitement to join the other villagers in the jungle.

But search as he might he could not find them anywhere and at last decided to cut a dippa for himself. He struck the first tree with the broken knife and at the blow ten trees fell to the ground. He struck again and another ten trees were felled. In this way a great dippa clearing was quickly made.

At sunset the boy came home and told his mother that he had made a small clearing. When the villagers came home they saw the huge dippa and were frightened saying, 'How did this boy manage to do so much in so short a time?'

After one or two months the Gaita told the villagers that the time had come to burn the wood in the clearings. The boy took fire from the Ghotul fire and when he put it to the first tree the whole clearing was burnt at once and the ashes were distributed all over the ground. Once more, as the villagers went home, they were astonished to see what the boy had done. Then came the time to sow the seed but there was no seed in the poor widow's house. He went from house to house but everyone refused to lend him anything. He went to his wealthy uncle and he again drove him away. As he was going home weeping he met a Sadhu. 'My child, why are you so sad? Tell me what is the matter and I will help you.' The boy told him his story and the Sadhu gave him a seed. 'Child, take this seed and sow it in your clearing and you will have all that you desire.' Then the Sadhu went away. The boy took the seed home and the next day went to his clearing and sowed it. Two or four days later when he went to look at it he found that it had already grown into a creeper. The other villagers passed by and laughed at the boy, 'Are you and your mother going to live eating a gourd?' The boy's mother also was anxious. 'The rest of the village will live on rice but we must be content with a gourd.'

At the time of harvest the boy's clearing was covered with a great creeper from which hung many gourds. On the day of the feast the boy brought one gourd from his clearing to his mother.

She grumbled at him but took it into the house and cut it open. A great pile of rice, fine and rich, fell out of it. Full of excitement the old widow ran to her neighbour to borrow a measure. They found that in a single gourd there were ten measures of rice and, full of joy and happiness, mother and son sat down to a hearty meal.

But now there was a new anxiety. Perhaps robbers would go to the clearing and steal the gourds, so the boy spent night and day guarding them. At last the mother called four of the neighbours to bring the whole crop into the house. 'We will give you one gourd a day for your labour,' said the mother, but when it had all been brought they paid them at the rate of two gourds a day. When all the gourds were cut there was such a quantity of the finest rice that they had to get new land on which to build granaries to store it. The youth sold his rice and became exceedingly wealthy, far richer than his uncle who had denied him help. He bought cattle, cows and bullocks, many goats and pigs; he dressed like a Raja and ate like a saheb.

When the villagers saw such prosperity in a poor widow's house, they grew jealous and someone set fire to the house and all the property was destroyed except the cattle which the boy managed to release in time.

Then the boy collected the ash and packing it in sacks carried it on the back of his bullock for sale in the bazaar. On the way he met a very wealthy but stupid merchant with his wife: they were tramping along tired and dusty on foot. The merchant asked the boy to let his wife ride on his bullock. 'The sacks that my bullocks are carrying are filled with gold worth ten thousand rupees. It is gold of such a kind that if your wife should fart, it will all turn into ashes.' When the merchant heard this he was doubtful, for he feared that if there was a mistake he would have to restore the gold. But his wife was so tired that he had to let her sit on the bullock. 'Then you must pay me ten thousand rupees if my gold is spoiled,' said the boy. The merchant agreed and they went along. As they drew near to their destination the bullock slipped in a hole and the woman farted. The boy at once said, 'Quick, take your wife off the bullock, for I fear my gold is destroyed.' They lifted the woman down and when they opened the sacks found them full of ashes. The merchant had agreed to pay, so he took the boy to his house and gave him the ten thousand rupees.

Full of delight the boy returned to his village. 'How did you get this money?' asked his uncle. 'Don't you know that the ash from a house that has been destroyed is full of magic?' said the boy. 'I sold it for ten thousand rupees.' When they heard this the whole village was excited and that night they all burnt down their houses. The next day there was a great to-do packing the ashes into sacks and when the bazaar day came again the villagers took them off expecting to return as wealthy men. But in the bazaar the people first laughed at them and then abused them and they came home full of hatred and swearing to revenge themselves.

Now the boy's uncle and the villagers went by night to the cow-shed and killed the boy's cattle. The next day the boy said to the villagers, 'You have killed these animals, so you had better eat the flesh. But give the skins to me.' The boy took the skins and cured them and went to sell them in the bazaar. It was late and darkness fell as he was going along. So for fear of wild animals he took shelter on the branch of a tall tree. At midnight he was awakened by the arrival of seven robbers with a great booty which they had just gained. They were dividing it at the foot of the tree quarrelling and striking each other in their excitement. The boy began to tremble with fear lest the robbers should discover him and put him to death. So violently did he tremble that he shook the skins from the bough of the tree and they fell down on top of the thieves. They, thinking that the police were on their track, fled for their lives, leaving their gains behind. At dawn the boy came down from the tree, threw away the hides and took the money to his house.

His uncle and the villagers came gazing with astonishment at the money. 'Don't you know that the hides of cattle killed in this way are full of magic?' said the boy. 'I sold them and got this money.' When the villagers heard this they were very excited. That night they killed their own cattle and on the next bazaar day took the hides to sell. Once again they were mocked and abused and driven out of the bazaar and came home filled with hatred and vowed to vengeance.

This time they decided to cut the boy's throat but he warned them that blood would be found on their clothes and on the ground and that the police would come and hang them. 'Why not tie me up in a basket and throw me into the river?' said the boy.

They agreed and made a box of leaves and tied the boy up in it and threw it into the river. The box floated down the stream until it was seen by a cowherd who was grazing his cattle on the banks. He ran into the river and pulled it to shore. As he was opening it the boy excited called out, 'How dare you stop me when I am on my way to Mahapurub?' 'How many times have you been?' asked the cowherd. The little boy said, 'I have been many times and every time I have come back a rich man.' Then the cowherd begged the boy to give him the chance of going once in his life and at last the boy agreed. He tied the cowherd up in the box, threw it into the river and sent it down the stream. He himself drove the cowherd's cattle to his house.

His uncle and the villagers came: 'How did you get all this cattle?' 'I floated upon the river,' said the boy, 'till I reached Mahapurub's kingdom. There are thousands of cattle and I brought a few with me and now I am going there every day to get more.' When the villagers heard this they were very excited and in the evening they made leaf-baskets and got the boy to tie them up and threw them into the river whereupon they were drowned. The boy became the landlord of the village and with his mother lived and ate.

II

THE CLEVER KOTWAR

A Gond story from Niwas Tahsil

A Bhoi and a Bhoin lived together in a village. There was a Panka Kotwar there. One day he said to the Bhoin, 'Come, let's be friends.' 'Yes', she said. But she went and told her husband. She said, 'You go to such and such a tree, climb up and hide. I'll bring him underneath.' Then she said to the Kotwar, 'Go and wait under the tree. I'll take a pot and pretend to go to relieve myself.' So the Kotwar went and waited under the tree, and presently along came the Bhoin. She lay down and said, 'Now you must do just what my husband does. He always kisses me first, and then gets to work.' So the Kotwar undid her clothes, and began to kiss her. But from the tree, the Bhoi shouted, 'Keep a

little for me. Don't eat it all, my Kotwar.' When the Kotwar heard it, he ran away, and the Bhoi and Bhoi went home laughing. But the Kotwar was very angry.

After eight or ten days, the Kotwar said to the Bhoi, 'Come and let us visit your son-in-law and your daughter.' When they arrived, the son-in-law washed their feet and made them happy. He killed a pig and the girl cooked it. Then the Kotwar went quietly to the girl and said, 'Your father doesn't eat meat nowadays; he only drinks the gravy!' So when they sat for food, the girl gave the Bhoi only gravy, but she gave the Kotwar a big piece of meat. They ate in silence and got up. A lot of meat remained.

In the night, the Kotwar said, 'What a strange girl your daughter is—she only gave you the gravy, while we had a lot of meat. I tell you what to do; when they've all gone to sleep, go and bring that meat and we'll have another meal.' So in the middle of the night, the Bhoi went and brought the meat. But there was no water, so the Kotwar said it would be better to keep the meat till the morrow and eat it on the way home. As they had been awake half the night, they slept very late in the morning. 'How am I to take the meat away?' said the Bhoi. 'Tie it in your dhoti in front', said the Kotwar, 'and bend down and say you have a stomach-ache.'

Then the Kotwar went to the Bhoi's daughter and said, 'Your father's dhoti is very dirty. Go and pull it off and wash it.'

The girl went behind her father and pulled off his dhoti and the meat fell down on the ground. The old man felt so ashamed that he ran away. But the Kotwar picked up the meat and took it home.

The Bhoi was so angry that he set fire to the Kotwar's house and it was burnt down. The Kotwar took twenty rupees and showed them to the Bhoi. He said, 'I took the ashes of my house which fortunately was burnt down, and sold them to a merchant in the bazaar.'

When the Bhoi saw that he thought, 'His house is much smaller than mine and he got so much for the ashes. I'll burn down my house and get much more!' So he burnt down his house, and put the ashes in sacks and took them to the bazaar.

But everybody laughed at him and he ran away.

12

THE RIDDLE-MAKER

A Bison-horn Maria story from Bara Harmamunda, Bastar State

A certain Maria borrowed twenty rupees from a money-lender. When the day came for repayment, the money-lender came to the Maria's house, but found the man himself and his wife and daughter away working in the fields. The Maria's little son, however, was at home; and when the money-lender asked him where the others were, he replied, 'My father has gone to cover thorns with thorns, my mother has gone to make small things big and my sister has gone to make two out of one.' The money-lender was not very clever except at getting money out of people, and begged the boy to explain what he meant. The boy refused, and at last the money-lender agreed not only to forgo the debt, but to give the boy a present if he would explain the riddle. The boy then said, 'My father has gone to build a fence of thorns round a garden of thorny brinjals; my mother has gone to a cotton plantation and has picked cotton and is stretching it to take out the seeds; my sister has gone to grind gram into a pulse.'

The money-lender gave the boy twenty rupees as a present and went away. When the Maria and his wife and the daughter came home, the boy told them proudly how he had managed to outwit the money-lender. But instead of being pleased, the parents only thought how they were to get the twenty rupees away from their son. Again and again they asked for it, but he refused, and they planned to kill him.

So next day the parents took the boy to a stream to catch fish. They threw poison into the water, and when the fish floated up to the surface they sent the boy into the water to fetch them. As he waded out into the stream, they pushed him into deep water and a great fish swallowed him. But the fish itself was affected by the poison, and was washed ashore.

Just then a tiger came to drink water and heard the fish saying 'Tar tir'. The tiger was angry, and shouted to know who was disturbing it while it was drinking.

From inside the fish's belly the boy replied, 'It is I who brush

my teeth with the twig of a toddy tree, and feed on tigers' tails.' The tiger shivered with fear, and begged the boy to spare it. The boy replied, 'Cut open the belly of the great fish which you will see to your left, but do it carefully. Then go to the opposite bank where you will find a sambhar. Kill it and eat whatever you want, but leave one hind leg for me at such and such a place, and run away without looking back. Then only will I spare you.'

The tiger slit open the belly of the fish, and when it went to the other side of the stream, the boy came out and hid himself in a bush close by. Presently the tiger returned with the hind leg of a sambhar, and putting it down at the spot named by the boy ran away. The boy picked up the leg, and went along the river bank till he came to a hut where an old woman was living.

'Grannie, where is my grandfather?' asked the boy. 'I have brought some meat for him and you.' So saying he removed all the flesh leaving only a thin layer to cover the bone. He gave the bone to the old lady and said, 'This is very good meat. Cook it and keep it for grandfather.' He put the flesh on one side and said, 'These are only bones, and we will eat them before the old man comes.'

When the old man came home, his wife gave him the bone to eat saying that it was tender flesh. But it got stuck in his throat, and he began to gasp for breath. The old woman, not realizing that it was a bone, pushed it still further down his throat, and the old man died.

Then the boy said, 'You have killed my grandfather. I am going to report the matter to the police.' The old woman was frightened out of her wits and showed the boy a pot of rupees which was buried in the courtyard, begging him to hush the matter up. 'Very well', said the boy, 'I will get rid of the corpse and then I will come for the money.' He put the body on his shoulder, and carried it through the jungle until he came to a field of maize and cucumbers in the middle of which was a well. At the mouth of the well he put the dead body in a sitting posture, and placed a carrier's pole on its shoulders.

Presently the owner of the field came along and, seeing the body, thought it was a robber who was removing the produce of his field. He threw a heavy stick at it and it fell into the well.

Out came the boy from his hiding-place. 'You have killed my

grandfather, and I am now going to report the matter to the police.' The poor man begged the boy to forgive him, and gave him a pot full of rupees. The boy then went to the old woman's house and got the other pot of rupees also, and, well pleased with himself, went out to search for adventures.

As he went, he saw a bear lumbering along the road in front of him. He crept behind it, and caught hold of its hind legs. Into its vent he put a rupee and scattered a handful or two of coins near its legs. Presently a Mussalman merchant came by on horseback. When he saw the strange sight, he asked the boy how he had managed to catch the bear so easily. 'How dare you disturb me when I am collecting my fortune? This bear excretes rupees, and I want to collect as many as I can.' The Mussalman came near, and when he saw the rupees on the ground as well as the silver coin in the bear's vent, he begged the boy to share his fortune with him. The boy at first refused, but at last he said, 'Very well, first of all collect the rupees in the ground and put them in your bag, and tie it to the back of your horse. I will take the money home and return presently, as I want to collect some more. You may have all the money that the bear excretes during my absence.'

The Mussalman did as the boy suggested, and the boy then asked him to hold the hind legs of the bear tightly, for it was sure to relieve itself of rupees in a few minutes. So saying he mounted the horse and rode away. The Mussalman waited and waited in vain for a shower of money; at last the bear relieved itself—and there was one rupee. Then the Mussalman knew that he had been tricked, and went home angry and disappointed.

As he was going along, the boy saw a washerwoman washing the Raja's clothes. He shouted to her, 'Why are you taking such a long time with the Raja's clothes? He wants them now whether they are washed or unwashed, and has sent me to get them.' The girl was so frightened that she gave him the clothes. After he had gone a little way, he dressed himself in them.

Now the boy met an old woman taking her grand-daughter to the river for a bath. He shouted to her, 'Why don't you walk more quickly? Grandfather wants the girl back at once, and he has sent me on his horse to fetch her.' He lifted the girl on to the horse, and rode away quickly until he came to a village where a Kalar's daughter was being married.

The boy alighted from his horse, and challenged the whole crowd to a test. 'Which of you', he said, 'can eat all by yourself a goat and a pot of rice?' They laughed at him and said, 'Of course we can't, but you can't either.' But the boy replied, 'Yes, I can, and if I do I must have the Kalar's daughter. If I can't, I will give you my bride', and he pointed at the girl whom he had just carried away. The people, glad at this diversion in the ceremony, agreed to the test. The boy secretly dug a little hole in the ground, and sat above it. The people killed a goat and cooked a great pot of rice, and when it was ready they brought it to the boy to eat. Every time he received a plateful, he pretended to fill his mouth, actually he pushed the food down into the pit without anyone noticing. He would then shout for more, accusing the servers of being lazy, and went on until more than one pot of rice and a goat and a half had been consumed.

They had to give the boy the Kalar girl, and he put her as well as the Maria girl on his horse and rode away into the forest till he found an empty house.

This house had been deserted by its former tenants, because an evil spirit lived there and troubled them.

Now all this while the Mussalman, the washerwoman, the old woman whose daughter had been carried away and the Kalarin's parents who had discovered the pit full of food, were searching for the boy; and it so happened that they met by the very hut where the boy was resting with his two wives. From outside they begged to be given shelter for the night. The boy who had seen them coming from a distance and had bolted the door from inside, at first refused, but finally agreed saying, 'Very well, I will let you sleep here, provided you do not relieve yourselves during the night. If you do, I will kill you.'

They needed shelter and they did not recognize the boy's voice, but thought it was the ghost speaking, so they promised not to relieve themselves, and tried to keep awake all night lest they should do so in their sleep. But they were very tired, and by midnight all were asleep. When he heard their snores, the boy relieved himself, and put a little of the excreta on the clothes of each of the sleepers. Presently they awoke, and noticing a bad smell they felt their clothes and found they had relieved themselves. Filled with terror they escaped from the place before it was dawn.

The boy now believed that he was safe, and built a great Palace and made himself Raja of the place. He brought people from all the neighbouring villages to come and live near him. But his younger wife, who was a Kalarin, was never allowed into the room where they kept the Pot of the Departed and the baskets of seed to be sown for the next crop. For this reason, because the boy first married a Maria girl and afterwards a Kalarin, the Maria never allow a junior wife to approach the Pot of the Departed or the grain which is kept for seed. Only when the elder wife is dead and a feast is given and special sacrifices made to the gods, can a junior wife do this.

NOTE I

The Girl who Escaped

This incident of the girl who catches hold of an overhanging branch and thus escapes is a recognized folk-tale trick to develop a plot. It occurs, for example, in the Punjab tales (Steele, 227), in South India (*Indian Antiquary*, xvii, 202ff.), and in Ceylon (Parker, ii, 372).

SADISTIC TALES

THERE are heroic boys, there are stupid boys, but there are also dangerous and offensive boys. In this book there is a prince who demanded the death of his sister; there is the other who killed his wife; there is the arrogant offensive youth who abused Bhagavan. These all represent that strain of cruelty which I notice elsewhere.

Nobody minds a real fool—the boy in the Kharia story, for example, who feeds his own shadow on bread¹, or the Santal boy who thinks his sickle has got fever and puts it to rest in the shade,² or the quite exceptional fool in the first of Shaik Chilli's stories.³ But the two tales in this Chapter afflict me with a sense of misery and evil. The chief characters are like untutored children pulling off the wings of butterflies or torturing little animals. There is no logic or reason in their cruelty. The antics of Shaik Chilli recorded by Mrs. Dracott are ordinary and amusing by comparison. In the Simla tale Shaik Chilli steals a camel instead of committing murder, but his mother avoids the consequence in the same way as in our story by pretending that it is raining cakes.⁴ The Sekchilli tale recorded by Miss Taylor, however, more closely resembles ours.⁵ The boy kills his friend by accident and the mother buries the corpse and throws a goat down a well. He cuts off a child's ear and burns an old woman to death quite in the spirit of our tale. Another youth of the same type appears in the Ho tale of a brother's revenge where a shepherd boy takes his flock to pasture and sits down to eat fried pulse. Many of the sheep and goats begin to work their mouths while sleeping and the boy thinking that they are making faces at him flies into a rage and kills them.⁶

The incident in Story 2, where Kana and Tarang make a bargain with their employer that whoever is defeated should give the other four fingers of the skin from his neck has many parallels. In one of Swynnerton's tales, the bargain is that if either master or servant gets angry he loses an eye.⁷ In

¹ Roy, *The Kharias*, ii, 437.

² Shaik Chilli, 4 ff.

³ *Folk-Lore*, vi (1895), 399 ff.

⁷ Swynnerton, *Indian Nights' Entertainments*, 106.

² Bompas, 260.

⁴ Dracott, 72.

⁵ *J.B.O.R.S.*, ii, 300

a Kashmir tale, if either was abusive he lost his nose.¹ In a Santal tale, the prince takes service with a farmer on condition that if he gives it up his finger will be cut off, but if his master dismisses him without proper cause it will be he who suffers.² A Ho tale describes how a prince and a barber friend are exiled together. The prince goes to work on the usual terms. He fails and loses a bit of skin a span long. His friend takes his place and avenges him by exacting from the master a similar penalty.³

I

A CLEVER SON

A Gond story from Sanhrwachhapar, Mandla District

In a certain village lived an old widow with a single son. That boy did no work, and the old mother had to earn enough for both. One day she said to her son, 'Son, you do no work. How are we to live? Go out to learn some wisdom at least.' So the next day the boy went to the village. There the village girls were playing, snapping their fingers and singing '*Heree balorey heree balorey!*' The boy played with them and learnt to do the same. When he came home he said, 'Mother, give me something to eat.' The mother said, 'Son, help yourself and eat.' The boy said, snapping his fingers, 'Where shall I put it?' His mother said, 'Put it under the roof.' So the boy put his hand under the thatch, and cried, 'Mother, give me something to eat.' Then the mother came and pulled his hand down from the roof and gave him his supper. The boy sat down; he snapped his fingers with one hand and ate his supper with the other. When he had finished he said, 'Mother, I'm going to the river to bathe.'

The boy went to the river, and there was the Raja's daughter bathing by herself. When the boy saw her, he sat down on the bank, and threw a small pebble at her. But she took no notice. Then he threw another, and the girl cried out. He threw a third stone and the girl fell dead. The boy ran to her and removed her ornaments and took them home and gave them to his mother.

¹ Knowles, 98.

² Bompas, 497.

³ Bompas, 258. A similar tale is given at p. 124.

When his mother heard the story she was very frightened, and wondered how to save her son. 'He will go telling everyone what he has done,' she thought. Presently she thought of a plan. 'Lie down and sleep, my son,' she said. When he was asleep, she killed a goat and put it in the place where the girl's body was and threw the body down a well. She made a great many gram cakes, and called two little boys. She sent them with the cakes onto the roof, and said, 'When my son comes out, throw the cakes down into the yard.' She woke the boy and sent him out. 'Go out and see, my son. It's raining gram cakes.' The boy ran out and at once gram cakes began to fall around him like rain. He was very pleased and ran about picking them up. Then the old woman caught the boy and took him into the house, and sent the boys on the roof away.

When the Raja found that his daughter did not return home he searched for her all over his kingdom. He called his subjects and asked them if they had seen her. When they had said they had not, he asked if all had come or no. The police said, 'There's one more, the widow's son.' They called him and the boy said, 'Yes, I saw her. I threw one stone at her and she said nothing. I threw a second and she cried out. I threw a third and she fell dead.' The Raja said, 'When did this happen?' The boy said, 'It was on the day it rained gram cakes.' At that the Raja laughed. 'When did it rain gram cakes? Has anyone ever heard of it raining gram cakes? The boy is a fool.'

They let the boy go home. He went back to his mother and taking the ornaments set out to another village to sell them. Presently he came to a town and went through the streets shouting, 'Buy my ornaments! Buy my ornaments!' When the women asked him how much they were, the boy said, 'They don't cost anything. Only the girl who takes them must sleep with me for a week and give me good food for a week. But if there's a fly in the food for even one meal, she will lose the ornaments.' The women laughed and said, 'No, that's too costly. We don't want your ornaments at that price.'

The boy went on and came to another town. Here was a very rich merchant. His wife was at home, but he had gone to another town to trade. This girl was longing for some new ornaments, for she was young and newly married. When the boy went by

crying, 'Buy my ornaments!' she called him and looked at the ornaments. When she heard the price, she said to the boy, 'I will give you what I eat myself, and as for sleeping with you—my husband is away for a month.' For a week the boy slept with the girl, and every day she gave him the best of food. On the last day, the boy said, 'Give me some milk.' As she went to fetch the milk the boy caught a fly and put it into his rice. When she returned with the milk and poured it over the rice, the fly floated up, and the boy cried, 'Look, there's a fly in my food. The bargain is ended.' And he took the ornaments and went away.

As he went along he met that very merchant, coming home to his wife. The merchant greeted him saying, 'Brother, where are you going?' The boy said, 'I have some ornaments, and I go to sell them. And where are you going?' The merchant told him and the boy knew then it was the girl's husband. The merchant said, 'I am newly wedded, and my wife longs for ornaments, but I have been unable to get any. Show me yours and tell me their price.' The boy said, 'O they cost nothing. I just want to pull out one pinch of the hair from your moustache and if your eyes don't water I'll give you the ornaments.'

The merchant thought, 'This is some mad fellow', but he said, 'Very well, brother; do what you will and give me the ornaments.' The boy made him lie down, and placed a foot on his chest. He seized his moustache and pulled so violently that the tears started from his eyes. So the boy said, 'No, you shed tears. I won't give you my ornaments.'

Away went the boy. By the roadside he passed a large sambhar lying dead. He removed a lot of the flesh, and roasted it, eating some and making the rest into strips of dried meat. He took the meat on his shoulder and went on to another town. Here too was a very rich merchant. This merchant had no children; there were only himself and his wife in the house. He had been very ill, but he was getting better and was sometimes hungry for food. The boy came to his house, and sat down by the merchant where he was crouching over a fire warming his hands. The boy took out a bit of dried meat, roasted it on the fire and ate it. The merchant smelt it and felt hungry. 'Give me some', he cried. 'What are you eating?' 'It's sambhar flesh', said the boy. And he gave some to the merchant. Now the sambhar meat had got

very dry and hard, and the good wife had to prepare it in a hurry. As a result she brought it in half-cooked, and when the merchant tried to eat it, it stuck in his throat. The wife cried to the boy, 'What are we to do? He'll die if we don't do something.' The boy said, 'Bring the rice-husker and hit him twice on the back with it, then he'll be all right.' The woman did as she was told, but when she hit the husband the second time he died. Then said the boy, 'Now you've killed your husband, what are you going to do?' She said, 'Teach me wisdom,' The boy said, 'Give me a horse and load it with rupees and then I'll tell you what to do and I'll tell no one what has happened.'

The woman brought him a horse laden with rupees, and the boy said, 'Don't be afraid. Shut the doors of your house, and in the night begin to weep loudly for your husband. The neighbours will think he has died of his illness, and no one will trouble you.' So saying the boy went away, and the neighbours buried the merchant without asking any questions.

Then the boy went home to his mother. He made a fine house, and found a beautiful girl to marry. Then they lived there happily all their days.

2

THE STORY OF KANA AND TARANG

A Muria story from Temrugaon, Bastar State

There were two brothers, the elder was called Kana and the younger was Tarang. They lived with their old mother. One day Kana went to plough, and the mother said to Tarang, 'Get me some hot water so that I can bathe.' Tarang made a lot of boiling water, and brought a white stone. He made his mother sit on the stone and poured the boiling water over her. It was so hot that all her skin came off her body and she died. Then Tarang was frightened of what Kana would do to him, so he took his dead mother to the Raja's garden, and propped her up against two sticks. When Kana came home, he asked where his mother was. 'O she is looking beautiful and white after her bath. She's out in the Raja's garden.' The brothers went to look for her; at the same

time the Raja went round his garden and seeing the old woman knocked her down. Kana took his axe and ran to kill the Raja: 'You have killed my mother, now I will kill you.' The Raja said, 'Don't hit me, my son, and I will give you my daughter in marriage.'

So Kana married the Raja's daughter, and took her home to his little hut. Kana said to his brother, 'I have just brought a new wife home; you go and plough in the field.' So Tarang went to the field; the bullocks had bells on their necks, and when Tarang pricked them with the goad, they ran away. The bells rang *tarang tiring tarang tiring*, and this made Tarang very angry for he thought the bullocks were abusing him. He chased them and killed them both.

When Tarang got home, his brother said, 'You're back very early.' He said, 'The bullocks had eaten so much that they would do no work, so I came home.' But Kana understood that he had killed the bullocks, and they both went with their pots to get the flesh to cook and eat. Kana cut off a lot of meat and loaded it onto Tarang's shoulders, saying, 'Take this home by the back way; don't let my wife see it; she is a Raja's daughter, and will ask her father to kill us if she knows.' But Tarang took no notice, and went to the very place where the Raja's daughter was pounding rice. He thrust the meat before her, then pushed a bit of it into her mouth and killed her.

Then Tarang went back to his brother, saying, 'She took all the raw meat and ate it, and now she is sitting before the house.' But Kana understood that Tarang had killed his wife, and he took him and ran away for fear of the Raja. In a field by the way they saw ten or twelve women weeding among the rice. They said, 'Give us a little to eat.' The women said, 'Come and work for us, then we will feed you.' Until he got his food, Tarang did his work well, but once his belly was full, he pulled up the rice and left the weeds in the ground.

When the women saw this, they stopped Tarang doing that work and sent him to look after a little baby that was sleeping by the field. Tarang took the baby to the bank of a river. There he made some mahua juice and rubbed it on the baby's neck, and tied it to the end of a bamboo and began to fish for crabs. The baby was soon drowned. Presently the child's mother got anxious and sent Kana to find the baby. Tarang cried that he had caught

a lot of crabs. 'But where is the baby?' asked Kana. 'Here it is', said Tarang, showing the dead body at the end of the bamboo. Kana once more took Tarang away quickly.

By the roadside was a she-buffalo giving milk to her calf. Tarang said, 'Brother, I want to drink some milk.' Kana said, 'Don't go near them or they'll kill you.' But Tarang took no notice and went to the buffalo and took her teat in his mouth and began to drink the milk. As he was drinking he cut off one of the teats. The buffalo jumped in the air, and tried to kill him, but the two brothers ran away and came to a cave where a tiger was sleeping. The brothers went inside, and the buffaloes stood outside.

Tarang said, 'I'll turn this creature out', and poked it with his stick. The tiger roared and ran out, but the buffaloes attacked it, and so all ran away.

Then the two brothers went to a town. They found a place by the road for a house, and prepared to get work. Presently a girl, angry with her husband, passed by on her way to her mother's house. Tarang quickly called his brother and disguised him by bandaging his head. 'Go after her', he said, 'and say that she is running away for no reason at all. Say you hit your head against the door.' So he followed her to her mother's house and standing outside cried, 'Why have you run away? I did nothing and I am very sorry for what I did.' When they saw him they thought he was the girl's husband, for he said he had hit his head against the door. So the girl got ready to go with him. Kana took the girl home and she lived with them.

The next day they went for work. Their master said, 'Will you have an earful (*kānbhar*) or a plateful (*pānbhar*) to eat?' Kana said he would have a earful, but Tarang demanded a plateful. His master said, 'If you beat me, I'll give you the skin from the back of my neck; but if I beat you, you must give me your skin.' Every day, Kana worked well, but he only got food to fill a little dish big as his ear, and grew very thin. So he went to his master and said, 'You have beaten me; take the skin from my neck.' So the master took four fingers of skin from his neck, and Kana went home.

Then Tarang made the same bargain with his master, saying 'I am going to eat a leaf-plateful.' Tarang took the cattle to graze, but he did nothing, he got them no food or water. When the time

for food came, he brought a huge lotus-leaf from the lake, and a whole pot of rice would not fill it. So he did day after day until he had eaten all the food in his master's house and brought him to beggary. At last the master said, 'Well, brother, I am beaten. Take the skin from my neck.' So Tarang took four fingers of skin from him and brought it home and put it on his brother's neck. Then Kana was well again, and they lived happily together in their house by the road. The story is finished.

THE DAY-DREAMER

IN this little tale is embodied a motif which has an ancestry of hundreds of years and of which Max Müller has said, 'It seems a startling case of longevity, that while languages have changed, while works of art have perished, while empires have risen and vanished again, this simple children's tale should have lived on and maintained its place of honour and its undisputed sway in every schoolroom of the East and every nursery of the West.'¹

This story of the day-dreamer has been traced in Europe through the Infante Don Manuel, who died in 1347, to the fourteenth century Pergamenus and to the sixteenth century story of Bonaventure of Periers.² It became famous through La Fontaine's fable of *La Laitière et le Pot au Lait* and is well-known in English in the tale of the Milkmaid and her Pail of Milk.

In India the story goes back to the *Panchatantra*³ where it is found in a not very attractive form. Thence it has spread through all the folk-tales and oral literature. Swynnerton records it for the Punjab⁴; Stokes⁵ and Dracott⁶ both have versions; Bompas gives the Santal variant⁷; it is known in South India,⁸ and in Ceylon.⁹ Miss Susette Taylor recorded it from an old Hindu woman in Bhopal State.¹⁰ As an example of the story as told elsewhere we may quote Swynnerton's version. In this tale a stupid village youth called Lall is hired by a soldier to carry an earthenware jar full of ghee. 'How lucky am I', says Lall to himself. 'This fellow is going to give me three ha'pence, and what shall I do with it? I know, I'll go into the market, and buy a hen with it, and the hen will lay eggs, and I shall have a fine brood of

¹ Qu. by Clouston, *Popular Tales*, ii, 443. P. G. Wodehouse has used the same idea with great success, notably in the Ukridge stories.

² Ibid., ii, 432 ff.

³ Swynnerton, *Romantic Tales*, 182 ff.

⁴ Dracott, 68.

⁵ Penzer, v, 229.

⁶ Stokes, 31 ff.

⁷ Bompas, 141.

⁸ Subramiah Pantallu, *Folk-lore of the Telegus*, 48.

⁹ Parker, i, 304.

¹⁰ *Folk-Lore*, vi (1895), 403. See also Kalipada Mitra, 'Originals and Parallels of some Santal Folk Tales', *J.A.S. Beng.*, xxv (1929), and Burlingame, *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, xlv, 533. The story has passed also into English folk-song and a Wiltshire metrical version is given in A. Williams, *Folk-Songs of the Upper Thames* (London, 1923), 40.

chickens. And I'll sell them all for what they will fetch, and when I have sold them, I'll buy a sheep. After a bit the sheep will have young ones, and when I have sold them I'll buy a cow. And when my cow has young ones I'll buy a milch buffalo; and when my milch buffalo has young ones, I'll sell her and buy a mare to ride on. And when I am riding my mare the people will all stare at me, and say, "O Lall, Lall!" and the girls will nudge each other and say, "Look at Lall on his beautiful mare!" And I shall not be long in making a match with some fine girl with a pot of money; and I'll get married and I shall have four or five nice little children. And when my children look up to me and cry, "Papa, papa!" I'll say to one, "O you little dear", and to another, "O you little darling!" And with my hand I'll pat them on the head, one by one, just like this.' Suiting his action to the word, Lall lowers his hand, and makes several passes in the air as if patting his children's heads; down falls the unlucky jar, breaks into a thousand pieces, and all the precious ghee runs about the street.¹

This is the standard version of the tale alike in India and Europe. It will be seen that the Gond story in the text differs in three ways.

1. The foolish hero on seeing his day-dream shattered on the ground demands and gets compensation from his master.
2. His day-dream is only a preliminary excursion in a course of folly in which he continues.
3. But this course of folly leads him to success and prosperity in the end.

It is interesting to find that here, as in several other cases, the aboriginals of Central India have adopted one of the most hackneyed tales, but have given it an original turn.

I

THE DAY-DREAMER

A Gond story from Karanjia, Mandla District

There was an old woman living with her son. One day the village was visited by a merchant who bought two pots of ghee. There was no one to carry the pots, so he went to the old woman's

¹ Swynnerton, op. cit., 182 ff.

house and said to the boy, 'Come, boy, carry my ghee and I will give you two annas.' The boy got ready and went ahead of the merchant carrying the ghee.

As he went the boy thought what he should do with the two annas he was to get. 'I'll buy a hen,' he thought, 'and it will lay a lot of eggs. I'll sell the chickens and buy a goat, then the goat will one day produce a herd and I'll sell those and so at last I'll be a big merchant too.' As he was thinking suddenly up flew a partridge from under his feet and the boy gave a jump and fell over. The pots of ghee fell to the ground and smashed. The merchant came up and abused him. 'You've spoilt all my ghee. You'll have to give me some more instead of it.' But the boy replied, 'You've lost twenty or thirty rupees-worth of ghee, but I've lost thousands of rupees. I would have bought a hen with your two annas, and then I'd have bought a goat and then one day I'd have been a big man. It's you who must give me money.'

When the merchant heard that he gave the boy a hundred rupees. The boy ran home with the money, and showed it to his mother. On the next bazaar day, the boy said, 'Mother, I want to go to the bazaar to buy something nice.' He went off to the bazaar and sat down quietly to watch what was happening. Then when everyone was going away he tied the hundred rupees in a bit of cloth to the end of a stick. There was an old thin dying bullock which the owner had failed to sell. The boy went to this man and said, 'Brother, you take my rupees and give me your bullock.' The man said, 'Brother, my bullock is only worth ten rupees and you want to give me a hundred.' The boy said, 'Never mind, you must exchange', and he handed the man the rupees and went off with the bullock.

As they went slowly along—for the bullock could only crawl, it was so old—night fell. There was an ant-hill by the roadside and on it stood a jackal. When it saw the boy it thought, 'This boy will kill me', but when the boy saw the jackal he thought, 'That jackal looks as if it would like my bullock.' So he cried to the jackal, 'Brother, I know you would like this bullock. So I am going to leave it here for you. Only next bazaar day when I come for it, give it back to me.' So saying the boy went home, leaving the bullock behind.

The bullock could walk no further and sat down. Presently it died for lack of food and water. The jackal came and ate it with pleasure. The next bazaar day when the boy came he said, 'This jackal isn't here; it must be hiding in the ant-hill.' And he began to dig it up. There at the bottom he found two pots full of rupees. He carried them home and he and his mother lived happily from that day.

THE HERO ON PILGRIMAGE

SARAT CHANDRA MITRA gave the name of 'Hero and the Deity Type' to a tale, the story radical of which he gave as follows:—

1. The hero goes to a deity to beg a boon.
2. On the way he meets with several suffering persons and beasts and a tree, all of whom importune him to inquire from the deity the causes and the remedies of their respective troubles.
3. The hero learns from the deity the causes and the remedies and communicates them to the sufferers.
4. They adopt the remedies, most of which result in rich rewards to the hero himself.¹

There are three stories of this type in the present collection, one from Bastar, one from Sarangarh and the Baiga tale from Mandla. I have also found a similar tale recorded by Mrs Dracott for the Simla area and by Mrs Wadia for Western India. Sarat Chandra Mitra discovered it in northern Bihar, in the District of Chittagong in eastern Bengal and among the Mussalmans of an area which has not been recorded. All these tales are very similar in their general theme, though the first story of our collection seems to me much the most interesting and remarkable.

Let us examine the tales one by one. In Mrs Dracott's version a poor Zamindar goes out to seek his fortune. On the way he is asked to make inquiries, when he reaches the place of his fortune, first by a Raja why his Palace is always falling down, then by a turtle why, although it lives in water, it suffers from a severe burning sensation, then by a plum tree why its fruits are always bitter. The Zamindar at last finds in the midst of the jungle an old fakir who has been asleep for twelve years. The fakir declares that he has reached the place of his fortune and should now return by the way he came. He announces that the Raja's trouble is due to the fact that he has not married his daughter; that the turtle burns because, though it is full of wisdom, it selfishly keeps

¹ *J.B.O.R.S.*, iii, 378 ff.

its knowledge to itself; the fruits of the plum tree are bitter because there is a hidden treasure at its root and when this is removed it will become sweet. The Zamindar goes and removes the treasure and the plums turn sweet. He tells the turtle and gets half its wisdom. He naturally is the person who marries the king's daughter. This is a very neat and consistent version of the tale.¹

Mrs Wadia's story 'The Sleeping Nasib', is told at much greater length and is confused with some supporting incidents, but follows the main theme. The poor brother of a rich man goes to find his Nasib or Luck which lies sleeping beyond the seven seas. As he goes he is asked by a mango tree, a fish, a Raja and a horse to discover the reason for the various trials that afflict them. When the hero at last finds his Nasib and asks his questions, his Nasib replies that the mango tree gives bitter fruit because of a treasure buried beneath it; the fish is suffering because it has a large solid slab of gold hidden in its stomach; the Raja has an unmarried daughter in his house and the horse is only waiting for a rider like the hero himself to mount it. Carried on the back of the horse the hero gets the gold from the fish, the treasure from below the mango, and wins the hand of the Raja's daughter. Here again it will be noted that the good luck or the fortune won by the hero does not come directly from the object of his quest but is concerned with the people whom he has to help on his way.²

In the story from northern Bihar recorded by Sarat Chandra Mitra, Bhagavan comes to an old woman in the guise of a Brahmin and promises her any boons she likes to ask. The woman's son hearing of this goes out to find the unknown Brahmin and get the boons from him. As he goes he first meets a Raja who is trying to build a bridge which falls down every evening, and the Raja requests the boy to inquire from Bhagavan why this should be. The boy then finds a Sadhu and his wife who cannot get a single disciple and hardly enough to eat. After this he comes to two pakur trees, one of which is withered and the other green. The withered tree wants to know what crime it has committed. Finally he sees an elephant whose trunk has got stuck in the branch of a tree. When the boy at last finds Bhagavan, the deity says that the elephant is being punished because it has not performed its duty of carrying men on its back, the tree has withered because there are ten

¹ Dracott, 96 ff.

² *Indian Antiquary*, xxii (1893), 213 ff.

jars of gold hidden at its root, the Sadhu is miserable because he has not shared his learning with a disciple, the Raja's bridge falls down because he has not given his daughter in marriage. When the boy asks Bhagavan for the boons he promised, the god replies, 'Go home, my lad, and you will get the promised boons.' As in the other stories, the boy mounts the elephant, rides on it to the withered tree, digs up the treasure, learns all the Sadhu's wisdom and arriving at the Raja's Palace marries his daughter.¹

S. C. Mitra's other examples of this legend from eastern Bengal are recited on the occasion of ceremonial worship, the first in honour of Lakshmi Chandra performed on the full-moon day of Pus and the second at the worship of the goddess Aranyashashthi in the month of Jeth. The two stories follow the same general scheme. In the first it is a tree, several persons and beasts and two tanks that inquire the cause of their sufferings; in the second it is a cow, a tree and three women. The elephant of the northern Bihar tale is represented in eastern Bengal by a woman whose foot has stuck fast to the pedal of a paddy-husker and in Chittagong by a crocodile which has half its body immersed in water and half out of it.²

An excellent Chenchu version of the tale has been recorded by C. von Furer-Haimendorf.³ A Raja has an unhappy daughter whose tears swell the waters of his tank and break it; a twelve-headed snake is old and sick but can neither die nor recover; a Chenchu falls from a tree and is eaten by seven tigers; a peasant's buffalo gives birth to a calf which can neither eat nor drink. Each asks the Chenchu pilgrim, who is himself disturbed because his food disappears whenever it is cooked, to inquire from Bhagavantarū the cause of his distress. He does so and all the problems are solved.

The Mussalman tale of this type was related to D. L. R. Lorimer by a Bakhtiar named Mulla Ilahi and translated into English by him.⁴ Here again the poor brother of a rich man goes to find his Luck which is asleep in a certain cave. The hero comes first to a garden where the trees bear no fruit, then to a country which is ruled by a king who is really a woman in disguise and whose subjects do not obey him. He then meets a wolf which begs him to ask the reason why it cannot get anything to eat, and finally a wood-cutter who wants to know why he has been condemned to earn his

¹ *J.B.O.R.S.*, iii, 378 ff.

³ Furer-Haimendorf, 212 ff.

² *J.B.O.R.S.*, iii, 383 ff.

⁴ *J.B.O.R.S.*, iv, 492 ff.

living by such hard work as that of cutting brushwood. When the hero finds his Luck lying fast asleep, he kicks him awake and inquires about the various matters which have been entrusted to him. There are of course four jars of gold hidden in the garden; the subjects of the Raja do not obey because he is a woman; the brushwood cutter is told that there is no way of altering his lot either for better or worse, and the wolf is told that whenever he comes across a foolish man he should gobble him up.

The story now follows a different course. After communicating the message to the wood-cutter, the hero goes to the disguised 'king' who asks him to marry her, but he refuses. Then he goes to the gardener who proposes that they should divide the four jars of gold between them, but the hero refuses. When at last he goes to the cave where the wolf lives, the wolf asks him to look up into the sky for a moment to see how many stars there are, and while he is looking upwards it seizes him by the throat and devours him, saying that it has never seen a greater fool than him.

There seems to be no end to the variety of these tales. The ease with which ethical instruction of different kinds can be imparted through this narrative technique is illustrated by a version of the Legend of Karam Raja that I recorded at Ronta village in Bonai State from the Pauri Bhuiya.

Long ago there was a Bhuiya merchant. He had seven sons, of whom six were married and worked in their fields. The seventh was unmarried and did nothing. He used to get up in the morning, bathe, cut a branch of the karam tree and plant it in the ground, make a drum from the stalk of a plantain and dance before the karam beating his drum and singing.

As a result of the youngest son's worship of the tree, much wealth came to the merchant's house, and the six elder brothers grew jealous. 'He only dances and never does any work.' So they broke his drum and drove him from the house. But when the worship of Karam Raja stopped the merchant's wealth quickly disappeared. He was an old man. He thought, 'I will go to Bhagavan and ask why I am getting so poor.'

On the way the merchant met an old woman who bade him ask Bhagavan why the rice-husker in her house always hit her own breast till she was ready to die with the pain. Presently he met a landlord who begged him to ask Bhagavan

why the tank he had dug had no good water but was full of worms. Then he rested in a garden whose owner wanted to know why the fruit on his mango trees always rotted.

The old merchant at last came to Bhagavan and asked him, 'I could not find room for my wealth in former days; where has it gone?' 'It is lost,' said Bhagavan, 'because your six sons drove out the youngest and stopped the worship of Karam Raja.' Then Bhagavan told him that the old woman's husker struck her in the chest because she would let no one else use it. The landlord would not let anyone but himself use the tank and so it was full of worms. The gardener's mangoes rotted because he let no one share the fruit.

Hearing this the old merchant went home, telling the gardener, the landlord and the old woman on the way what Bhagavan had said. When he reached his own house, he called his youngest son. The worship of Karam Raja was resumed and the merchant's wealth returned.

This story is recited by the village priest during the celebrations of the Karam festival in Bonai, in this resembling the Bengal custom noted by S. C. Mitra.

The stories in the present Chapter fit very well into the general type. The moral lessons taught are of the same kind. In several stories there is a curious element of hostility towards the object of the pilgrimage. In one, the poor hero kicks his Luck awake, in another he twists the toe of his Nasib and abuses it for causing him so much trouble, the hero of the Baiga story goes to beat Bhagavan, and in the Bastar tale he tries to beat Vidata.

I

BUSINESS WITH VIDATA

A Muria story from Nayanar, Bastar State

In a certain city lived a merchant who was very rich but had no children. One day he thought to himself, 'If I "bind friendship" with a rich man I will get no fame from it; I had better find a poor man as my friend.'

In that city was a Mahara who had seven sons and daughters; he was very poor. To him came the merchant saying, 'I want to

“bind friendship” with you, you must be my mahaprasad.’ The Mahara said, ‘O Mahapurub, how can I be your friend? You see my poverty, I cannot give you so much as a coconut.’ But the merchant said, ‘I will see to that. It will cost you nothing.’

The next day, the merchant called the neighbours to his house. He put equal presents in two large plates, and ‘bound friendship’ with the Mahara who now became his mahaprasad. He gave the guests mahua liquor in plenty and let them go. For his new friend and his friend’s children, he provided clothes and gave them a great feast.

Then said the Mahara, ‘O friend, we’re off home now.’ The merchant bade farewell and told his servants to send five measures of rice to the Mahara’s house. The Mahara and his family ate it all in ten meal-times.

So the Mahara went again to his rich friend and said, ‘O friend, you gave me five measures of rice, but we finished it in ten meal-times, and now your friend’s children are dying of hunger.’ The merchant therefore sent ten measures of rice to his friend’s house.

The Mahara and his family finished this in twenty meal-times, and back went the Mahara to his rich friend. ‘You gave us five measures and you gave us ten measures and it’s all finished, and now your friend’s children are dying of hunger.’ So now the merchant sent twenty measures of rice to his friend’s house.

The Mahara and his family finished this in forty meal-times, and this time the merchant was expecting his friend. He filled a gourd with rupees and closed its mouth. When the Mahara came saying, ‘You gave us five measures and you gave us ten measures and you gave us twenty measures and it is all finished, and now your friend’s children are dying of hunger’, the merchant said, ‘This time I will give you a gourd.’ He told his servants to take the gourd to his friend’s house, and they carried it on a pole and gave it to the Mahara. He said, ‘When I get some rice, I’ll cook the gourd with it’—for he did not know that it was full of silver.

That day was the Diwali festival, when the Muria went to dance round the city. The Mahara cried, ‘Don’t come here, brothers, it’s no use dancing here, I’ve got nothing to give.’ But they said, ‘This is a festival, we’re going to dance everywhere.’ When the Muria had finished dancing, the Mahara brought out the gourd and

gave it to them. A Muria boy tried to pick it up but failed. Then two or four men tried, but it was no use. At last they carried it off strung to a pole.

The next day, the Mahara went to his friend and said, 'O friend, we've eaten all you gave us. I had to give the gourd to the Diwali dancers.' The merchant cried, 'Data gave it, Vidata took it.' The Mahara said, 'Then I'm going to find this Vidata, and when I find him, I'll give him a good hiding.'

So saying, he seized a big stick and stamped out in a rage. After a time he came to the Konari jungle, and there he saw a father and son ploughing their field. They asked him, 'O brother, where are you going?' He said, 'I'm off to find Vidata.' They said, 'When you see him, give him a message from us. Ask him why, when we put our blankets on that ant-hill, the white ants don't eat it, and why tigers don't come here to devour us?'

The Mahara went on his way, and presently he saw a corpse lying by the road. This corpse was twelve years old. After they had buried it, the legs and arms and body had decayed, but the head had come out of the grave and was still alive. The corpse said, 'O brother, where are you going?' The Mahara said, 'I'm off to find Vidata.' The corpse said, 'When you see him, give him a message from me. Tell him that I died twelve years ago and was buried. Tell him I am rotten, but life remains in my head. Ask him why does not my head decay also.'

The Mahara went on his way, and presently he saw another corpse. This too was twelve years old, and all had rotted away save the head and chest and the right arm. The corpse said, 'O brother, where are you going?' The Mahara said, 'I'm off to find Vidata.' The corpse said, 'When you see him, give him a message from me. Ask him why my whole body is not rotten like my legs and arm.'

The Mahara went on his way and at last he came to a new kingdom. The Raja of this land had sent his people to build a wall against the sea. The wall had stood for a while, and then the sea broke it down and the water flowed into the land. The Raja and his Rani were both blind. When the Mahara came there, the Diwan asked, 'O brother, where are you going?' The Mahara said, 'I'm off to find Vidata.' The Diwan said, 'When you see him, give him a message from me. Ask him whether the Raja

and Rani will ever see again, and whether the wall that we try to make will ever stand against the sea.'

The Mahara went on his way. Then Mahapurub thought to himself, 'This silly Mahara goes on looking for me, and he is now worn out. I will go myself to see him.' So thinking, Mahapurub took the form of a Bairagi and stood by the roadside. When he saw the Mahara he said, 'O brother, where are you going?' The Mahara said, 'I'm off to find Vidata.' Then asked Mahapurub, 'What is your business with Vidata?' The Mahara said, 'Data gave me, and Vidata took away; so I'm going to beat Vidata five times.' Mahapurub said, 'Well, go your way.'

Then Mahapurub went quickly ahead and stood in the way and again asked the Mahara the same things. And he did this a third time. When the Mahara saw him the third time, Mahapurub said, 'I am Vidata.' 'Then tell me,' shouted the Mahara, 'when Data had given me, why did you take away? Tell me, or I'll beat you five times.' Then said Mahapurub, 'Your friend gave you five, and ten, and twenty measures of grain and you ate it all—for you are a fool. Then he gave you a gourd full of rupees and you gave it away—for you are a fool. It was not your friend who gave you, it was I. But as you had no wisdom you threw it all away.'

The Mahara was angry at this, and he lifted his stick and struck Mahapurub five times, shouting, 'Listen, I have some more to say.' And he told him all about the father and son in the Konari jungle, and the two corpses by the road and the blind Raja and Rani and their wall against the sea.

Then said Mahapurub, 'As for the father and son in the Konari jungle, a tiger has eaten them already, and the white ants have destroyed their blanket.'

Then said Mahapurub, 'As for the corpse you saw, he was a very rich man, and had buried all his money in the earth, and never told his son where it was. The son has suffered all these twelve years, for he has no money. That is why there is still life in the corpse's head. When he tells where the money is, then he will die and be at peace.'

Then said Mahapurub, 'As for the second corpse, he was a very great magician, and he never told his charms to anyone. That is why he cannot die. When he tells someone, he will die and be at peace.'

Then said Mahapurub, 'The Raja and Rani are blind because they have not married their daughter. When they marry her their eyes will open and the waters of the sea will be stayed.'

- 'At this the Mahara recognized Mahapurub and fell at his feet. He rose and said, 'Well, I'm going now.' He went first to the blind Raja's kingdom and told the Diwan what Mahapurub had said. The Diwan took him to the Raja, and the Raja thought, 'This must be a very big man, if he can talk to Vidata; he must marry my daughter.' And he married his daughter to the Mahara, and at once the eyes of the Raja and Rani were opened, and the waters of the sea were stayed.

The Raja gave the Mahara many presents, money and horses and elephants; but after a few days the Mahara took his wife and a train of servants and went on his way.

When they came to the corpse, the Mahara pitched his camp some distance from it. When he went to it and the corpse asked what message he had, the Mahara told him what Mahapurub had said. The corpse said, 'To whom shall I tell my charms? There is no one here.' So he told them all to the Mahara. As he finished the last of the charms, his eyes closed and his head and arm immediately decayed.

When the Mahara went to the second corpse, he gave it Mahapurub's message, telling him to tell his son where his money was. The corpse said, 'Where is my son? I must tell you.' Then he told him how five pots full of money were buried beneath the hearth, and three under the threshold, and four under the sleeping-place. So saying, his eyes closed and the head immediately decayed.

The Mahara went quickly to that village and found that rich man's house. There was the son in great poverty, and he told him where the money was. When they found it, the son gave the Mahara five pots of money. The Mahara took the money and went home. Now he was like a Raja, and when his wife heard of his return she went with drums and music to bring him to the house. Directly they reached their little hut it turned of its own accord into a Palace.

But the merchant who was the Mahara's friend had by now sunk into deepest poverty and was living in a little hut. The Mahara did not once ask after his friend, but enjoyed himself in his Palace.

THE GREAT ONE

A Binjhwar story from Sarangarh State

There was a Thag-boy living in a village. The people were frightened of him and refused to give him work. His mother was a widow and he was the only son, so she had to work to feed them both. One day she said, 'My son, you do no work. Go and seek some Great One and learn from him and then you may be able to earn something.' The boy said, 'I've only got these old clothes, give me some new ones or no one will take any notice of me.' She dressed him up and gave him shoes and an umbrella. As he bade farewell he said, 'Don't weep if I die, I will come back if I can.' The boy travelled far, over mountains and through great forests. He met a Sadhu on the way and cried, 'O Great One, teach me how to live', but the Sadhu had a vow of silence and made no answer. Then the boy came to a great rock which he thought was the greatest thing he had ever seen. 'O Great One,' he cried, 'teach me how to live.' He stayed there for three days but the rock made no answer. He went still further and met an elephant and said, 'O Great One, teach me how to live.' 'I am not great', replied the elephant. 'There is one greater than me and his name is Bhagavan.' 'Then', said the boy, 'I will go to him.' 'When you find him,' said the elephant, 'ask him whether I will ever get a bellyful of food.'

The boy left the elephant and presently he met a cowherd clothed only in a tattered blanket. 'Where are you going?' asked the cowherd. 'I am going to the Great One', answered the boy. Then the cowherd said, 'Ask the Great One whether I will ever get any clothes to wear instead of this dirty blanket.'

A little later the boy came to the field of a Gond who was ploughing with three bullocks. 'Where are you going?' he said. 'I am going to the Great One', answered the boy. 'Then tell him', said the Gond, 'that once I had many bullocks, ask him if he is going to take away from me even these or will he give me more?'

That night the boy lay down to sleep under a mango tree. The fruits of the tree rotted directly they fell to the ground. The mango

tree asked, 'Where are you going?' 'I am going to see the Great One', answered the boy. 'Then ask the Great One', said the mango tree, 'whether my fruit is always going to rot like this or will people one day be able to eat it?'

By now the boy was very thin and he could hardly walk. He sat under a tree in the middle of the jungle and said, 'O Great One, help me', and fell asleep. As he slept, his spirit left his body and went to Bhagavan. The boy fell at his feet and cried, 'O Great One, teach me how to live.' After that he gave Bhagavan all the messages from the people along the road.

Bhagavan answered, 'You can live best by going home and working hard on your mother's fields. Tell the elephant that it is so big already that if it ate any more it would not be able to walk. Tell the cowherd that I am angry with him because he grazes the cattle in places where there is no fodder, and I will strip him even of his tattered blanket. Tell the Gond that because he gives his cattle no rest but drives them with the goad, I shall take away even the bullocks that he has. Tell the mango tree that the man who planted it was very mean and therefore its fruit will always rot.'

Then the boy's spirit returned to his body and he awoke and turned his steps towards his home.

3

THE BEATING OF BHAGAVAN

A Kath-Bhaina Baiga story from Taliyapani, Bilaspur District

A Raja ruled over a town where lived an old Baiga and his wife. The Baiga had been in the Raja's service for many years, and to reward him the Raja gave him a large block of gold and sent him home to enjoy the remainder of his days. On the way home the old man came to a river. He put down the gold upon the bank and went to bathe. But a dog came by and stole the gold. The old man thought that Bhagavan had taken it, and he got very angry and said, 'I'll kill Bhagavan for this.' He shouldered his axe and went down the road to search for Bhagavan. Soon he came to a great tank that a Seth had made. It was very deep, but there was no water. 'Where are you going?' asked the Seth. 'I

am going to beat Bhagavan.' 'When you see him tell him that there's been no water in the tank for five years.'

Then the old man came to a field and saw a horse standing there. 'Where are you going?' asked the horse. 'I'm going to beat Bhagavan.' 'Then when you see him, tell him that no one has ridden me for twelve years.'

Then the old man came to a village where a Gond was living. He had five wives, but they all had run away. Only his sister was with him. Then Bhagavan came in the form of a Dewar and said to the old man, 'Where are you going father?' 'I'm going to beat Bhagavan.' So Bhagavan said, 'Why do you trouble to go further? Go home and you'll find the gold in your own house.' But the old man said, 'I must first write a letter.' So Bhagavan wrote it for him. In the letter the old man told the whole matter of the Seth, the horse, and the Gond. Then said Bhagavan, 'Tell the Seth to bury a ring in the tank and water will spring up. As you go, saddle the horse and it will carry you home. Take the Gond's sister with you, and all his five wives will return to him.'

So the old man did as he was ordered, and everything happened as Bhagavan had said. At last when he came to his own house, he found that the dog had carried his gold home. So he married the Gond's sister and they lived happily together.¹

¹ Another version of this tale, 'The Poor Boy who went in search of Isvara', from Salsette, was recorded by G. F. D'Penha, *Indian Antiquary*, xvii, 13 ff.

THE LANGUAGE OF ANIMALS

IN this short story no fewer than seven distinct and famous motifs are combined. Let us consider them one by one.

1. *Understanding the Language of Animals*.—The famous *Sabharata Janana Mantra* is bestowed on men in order to enable them to understand what animals are saying. This idea goes back to the *Kharaputta Jataka* (No 386) where Raja Senaka received from a Naga king whom he had befriended a charm giving knowledge of all sounds, after which he was able to understand even the talk of ants.¹ The same theme recurs in a folk-tale where Mahadeo confers upon a cowherd the faculty of understanding the speech of all living beasts, in the Santal tale of 'Ramai and the Bonga',² where a grateful Bonga gives the cowherd power to understand the language of ants, and in Knowles's *Folk-tales of Kashmir*.³ Two of the Ceylon tales are on the same theme.⁴ This is different from the ordinary 'Overhearing' motif which is generally a means of warning about dangers to come and where the power to understand animals or birds is not stressed. Yet here too is the same danger of revealing what has been heard.

2. *Animals that reveal a Buried Treasure*.—This, of course, is a very common theme which occurs in many different settings. Sometimes a man's soul leaves his body in the form of a lizard or grasshopper and discovers buried treasure hidden in an ant-hill. In the stories under review, in the Ho tale the cowherd hears a cow talking to her calf and thus learns where two pitchers full of coins are buried.⁵ The same incident recurs in the Santal story,⁶ as well as in the tale given in the text.

3. *The Difficulty of Keeping a Secret and Danger of Revealing it*.—In the Jataka tale already quoted, Raja Senaka is warned that if he reveals the spell to anyone, he will at once enter the fire and die. In the Ho tale Mahadeo warns the cowherd that the moment he discloses his secret to anyone he will die.

¹ J.B.O.R.S., xii, 576. Cf. K. P. Mitra, 'Bird and the Serpent Myth', *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* (Bangalore), xvi, 161 ff.

² Bompas, 393 ff.

³ Knowles, 78, 90, 412, 432.

⁴ Parker, ii, 417-18 and iii, 258-60. For the motif generally, see Penzer, ii, 107-8 n.

⁵ J.B.O.R.S., ii, 286.

⁶ Bompas, 230.

In the Santal tale, the Bonga tells the cowherd that if he tells anyone about his newly acquired gift, he will lose it. The same warning occurs in the Khuntia Chokh story in the text. Nearly all the stories represent the difficulty of keeping a secret from the inquisitiveness of women. In the Khuntia Chokh story the cowherd's wife notices that her husband is thoughtful and abstracted. She bothers him until he gives her a fictitious reason for his anxiety. So also in the Ho tale the cowherd tests the secretiveness of his wife by telling her that the Raja's wife has been brought to bed of a young crow. In both cases the wives immediately spread the news round the village. In other stories, so entertaining is the conversation of animals and insects that the listeners laugh and their wives try to discover why. In the Santal tale, as Ramai was eating his dinner he dropped some grains of rice and two ants fell to quarrelling over one of the grains. Ramai heard them abusing each other and was so amused that he laughed out loud. His wife gave him no peace till he told her the reason for his amusement, whereupon he lost his magic power.¹ So also when Raja Senaka was eating a drop of honey, a drop of molasses and a morsel of cake fell to the ground. When an ant saw this it cried, 'The Raja's honey jar is broken, his molasses cart and cake cart are upset, come and eat honey and molasses and cake.' When the Raja heard this he laughed and the Rani nearly prevailed upon him to impart to her his charm. In one tale from Ceylon the Raja bursts out laughing on hearing the grateful talk of the animals he is rearing and his Rani tries to persuade him to reveal his secret², in the other, he overhears a really witty conversation between red ants with the same result.

4. *The Unhappy Cowherd*.—In our story, just as in the Ho story and the Santal story of the 'Wife who could not keep a Secret',³ the cowherd tests his wife by telling her a ridiculous tale about the Raja, in the first case that a stream of blood came from him, in the second that his wife had been brought to bed of a crow, in the third that the Raja had a tortoise in his belly. None of the wives can hold their tongues and the story quickly reaches the Palace, the cowherds are arrested and in order to avoid a worse fate are compelled to reveal their secret. In the Khuntia Chokh

¹ Bompas, 394. See also Campbell, *Santal Folk Tales*, 22.

² Parker, iii, 258.

³ Bompas, 235.

tale the cowherd slowly turns into stone as he tells his story. In the Ho tale, directly he has given out his secret the man drops dead. In the Santal tale, he only loses half the treasure. In the parallel story of Ramai, the supernatural gift of the Bonga is withdrawn. In one of Shovona Devi's stories, a wax prince animated by a snake is asked by his wife to reveal his story and as he does so he slowly turns into a snake.¹

5. *The Animals' Example*.—In some of the stories, after the Raja has extracted the secret from the cowherd, the queen insists on being told the story. The Raja by now knows that if he repeats the tale he himself will die. He attempts to save himself by telling his wife one or more stories which I will describe immediately, and is finally saved by an incident which brings him to his senses. Raja Senaka has nearly been persuaded to tell the charm, when he is saved by Sakka in the form of a goat making love to a she-goat in front of his chariot. In the Ho version the Raja, finding himself unable to refuse his wife anything, takes her to the banks of a sacred stream where he can meet death with composure after telling his story. He too hears a pair of goats talking to each other. The he-goat tells his wife that there is a Raja going to his doom as he has been foolish enough to yield to a woman's importunity. 'I give no heed to a woman's doing.' This so impresses the Raja that he changes his mind and returns to the Palace with his secret undisclosed. In the Santal tale recorded by Campbell, as the Raja is about to reveal his secret to his wife, he hears a he-goat say that he is not going to be like the foolish king who risks his own life to please his wife. The Raja then makes his queen kneel before him in penitence and beheads her. In the story in the text the Raja, as in the Ho story, goes to a quiet place to face his death and he too overhears a quarrel between two goats, comes to his senses and brings his wife to hers.

In the charming 'Ant Story' from Ceylon, the Raja who has laughed at the conversation of red ants and is pestered by his wife to say why, hears a group of monkeys quarrelling. A female monkey makes a fuss about her food and is well beaten. The Raja seeing this thinks, 'These irrational animals are not afraid of their wives', and gives his queen a good beating after which she troubles him no more.²

¹ Devi, 20 ff.

² Parker, ii, 417-18. In the other story, after a talk about statistics with a

There is a remarkable parallel in a tale from Abruzzi, Italy. Christ lodges with a rich lord and rewards him by giving him the gift of understanding the language of animals, but warns him not to tell the secret to anyone, not even his wife. As the lord listens to the talk of the ox and ass, he is so amused that he laughs and his wife demands the reason, and sulks when he refuses to reveal it. The lord is depressed until at last he hears a cock boasting of the way it keeps its twenty wives in order. The lord laughs and follows its example and all is well.¹

6. *The Story of the Faithful Mongoose*.—The Khuntin Chokh story is unique in containing two famous tales which are repeated by the Raja in the hope of bringing his wife to her senses. The first of these is the very relevant tale of the man whose child was saved by a mongoose and who, misunderstanding the situation, wrongfully killed his benefactor. This story goes back to the *Panchatantra* and Clouston gives a full version which, he says, was current in the 'North-West Province' of India.

In a certain village, there lived a poor family, consisting of the man and his wife and several children. One day, when her husband and elder children had gone out to work and the younger ones to play, the mother put her infant son on the ground, and by his side he placed a *thalee* (a metal plate) of water to amuse himself with while she went about some necessary household duties. Before setting about cleaning the rice and so forth in the adjoining room, as they had a tame mongoose about the house, she caught and tied it up not far from the child, thinking that if loose it might hurt the boy. When the mother had left the room, a cobra-snake, hearing the splashing of the water, came out of its hole to have a drink. The little child, not knowing what it was, stopped playing with the water, intently watching the snake as it came up and began to drink. Having satisfied its thirst, the reptile was gliding back to its hole, when the little innocent put out his hands and caught it, thinking to amuse himself with the pretty new toy. The snake made no resistance, and in turn amused itself with twining in and out of the boy's arms and legs, until somehow the child

jackal, the king goes home and beats his queen till she keeps quiet. A Mathura legend ends more tragically. See Cunningham, *Archaeological Reports*, vii, 4.

¹ Qu. by Frazer from Antonio de Nino, *Usi e Costumi Abruzzesi* (Firenze, 1887), Vol. iv. See also Frazer, 'The Language of Animals' in *Garnered Sheaves* (London, 1931).

accidentally hurt the snake, when it turned round and bit him in the neck. On feeling the bite, the child let go of the snake, and very soon became motionless, the snake gliding off to its hole. The mongoose, directly the snake (which is its natural enemy) came out of its hole, began making fruitless efforts to break the string with which it was tied, and failing in that, succeeded in biting the string through, just as the snake had slipped into its hole. Having seen what the snake did to the child, the mongoose ran off quickly into the jungle to get some snake-root.

Meanwhile the mother, alarmed at his unusual silence, coming into the room at that moment, and seeing the child motionless, ran and took him up and tried her best to restore animation, crying heartily all the time. Having found the antidote, the mongoose ran back quickly with it in its mouth into the room, and the mother, turning her head in that direction, seeing the mongoose loose, and having remarked a wound on the child's neck, immediately concluded that the mongoose had bitten and killed her little son. Without reflecting a moment, she seized the mongoose, and in a rage dashed it on the ground with all her strength. After one or two convulsive motions the pet mongoose died, and then, too late, the mother discovered something in the animal's mouth, and, examining it closer, recognized the snake-root. Intuitively divining all the circumstances, she instantly reduced the root to powder, and administering it to the child at once, had the happiness of seeing her darling returning to consciousness. The mongoose having been a great pet with all the children, the news of his death caused general grief, to no one more than the mother, who resolved never to let her anger master her again.¹

7. *The Faithful Dog*.—Finding that his appeal to the wife by means of the fate of the mongoose has fallen on deaf ears, the Raja repeats the famous story of the faithful dog. This theme has been elaborately studied by Emeneau, who regards it as a subsidiary variant of the general type called by Bloomfield 'Hasty Ingratitude, or Strike but Hear'. He discusses ten versions previously recorded from Cawnpore, Lucknow, Mirzapur, the Central Provinces, Kathiawar, Baluchistan, Hyderabad, Nasik, Kashmir and the Tamilnad and adds a new version of his

¹ Clouston, ii, 179 ff. For the antagonism of the mongoose to snakes, see *Encyclopædia Britannica*, xiv, 242 and Penzer, iii, 115-16.

own recorded from the Kota tribe in the Nilgiris.¹ He points out that this tale is distinct from the Western parallels that have sometimes been drawn, and that it is incorrect to call it 'Gelert in the East' as a writer in *Man* has done.² So fully has this widespread story been treated by Emeneau that there is no need for me to say more about it here.

It is interesting to find enboxed in a single tale the two motifs, that of the mongoose and the dog, which are classified by Bloomfield under the single heading of 'Hasty Ingratitude'.

Indeed the most interesting thing about these seven different motifs is to find that many of them are combined together in stories so widely distributed.

I

THE RAJA AND THE COWHERD

A Khuntia Chokh story from Uprora Zamindari

A cowherd and his wife lived in a little village. The cowherd used to drive his cattle out into the jungle for grazing. By the roadside there was a stone god and every day the cowherd hit it five times with his stick. One day that god was pleased with the cowherd and said, 'O cowherd, you serve me well. Ask any gift you like.' The cowherd said, 'You dirty stone, how dare you talk to me?' and beat it again. The stone cried, 'No, no, don't beat me, I will really give you something.' 'What can a stone give me?' shouted the cowherd. But after the stone had promised him a gift three times, at last the cowherd said, 'Every day I hear my cows talking to one another, but I cannot understand them. Teach me their language.' The stone said, 'Why not ask for money?' 'No', replied the cowherd. 'All I want is to understand the language of my cows.'

That morning when the cowherd took his herd to the jungle there was a great hailstorm and all the cattle ran back to the

¹ M. B. Emeneau, 'The Faithful Dog as Security for a Debt', *J.A.O.S.*, lxi, 1 ff. The *Mandla District Gazetteer* gives details, not recorded by Emeneau, of the Kukurramath Temple. See also 'Notes' on this subject by V. Elwin and M. B. Emeneau, *J.A.O.S.*, lxii, 339 ff. I have found yet another version, from Orissa, recorded in Gupta, 21 f. Gupta also gives the story of the mongoose.

² A. H. A. Simcox, 'Gelert in the East', *Man*, xxxii (1932), 16-17. For the legend of Llewellyn and Gelert generally, see Clouston, ii, 166 f.

village, except one bullock and a cow and her calf which remained sheltered under a tree. The cowherd stood behind the tree listening to them.

Presently the bullock said, 'Boonr', and the cowherd understood that this meant, 'Where have all our friends gone?'

The cow answered, 'Bann', and again the cowherd understood that this meant, 'All our friends have run away; only you and I and my calf and the cowherd are remaining here.'

Then the bullock said, 'Abbaa', which meant, 'We are all sheltered from the rain, but this poor cowherd is getting wet. If you have any room, call him.'

The cow answered, 'Aabaa', which the cowherd understood to mean, 'There are three pots full of rupees where you are standing and there are two pots under my calf and there are six pots under me. Call the cowherd here and he can stand above the two pots.'

At this the bullock pushed the calf aside and brought the cowherd to shelter. Presently, the rain stopped and the cattle went away to graze. The cowherd dug in the ground and found the rupees; but when he saw them he carefully hid them again with earth.

When he reached home he was so busy thinking that he could not talk to his wife. She said, 'Why are you sad today?' He said, 'No I am not sad, I am only thinking.' 'What are you thinking about?' she cried. 'You must tell me.' 'No, it is nothing.' 'But our two lives are joined together and we must share.' At last the cowherd said, 'I am worried about the Raja. Today he was out hunting and sent me for water. Then he went to relieve himself and many crows flew down and much blood came from it.' When she heard that, the cowherd's wife said nothing. Now her neighbour used to work in the Raja's Palace. Early next morning both went for water and on the way the cowherd's wife could not keep the story in her belly and told it to her friend.

When her neighbour went to the Palace to work she told the Rani the story. The Rani was angry, for she suspected that her husband was in love with this woman, and she went and abused him. So then he called the woman and asked her where she had heard the story, and when she told him he sent for the cowherd and forced him to tell him about the rupees. Then the Raja got on his elephant and the cowherd took him to the place where the rupees were hidden. The cowherd said, 'I knew I could not trust

my wife with the story of these rupees and to test her I told her lies about you, but no woman can hold her tongue.' Then the Raja said, 'But how did you get these rupees?' 'Do not ask me', begged the cowherd, 'for if I tell you I will turn into stone.' But the Raja forced him to tell. The poor cowherd began his story, and his feet turned into stone. He went on, and he became stone up to the waist. As he continued, he became stone up to his chest. Then he begged the Raja to spare him from telling the end of the story so that at least his head would remain and he would be able to eat. But the Raja had no pity, and as the cowherd finished the story, his whole body turned into stone.

The Raja put the money on his elephant and went home. His wife ran out to hear what had happened. 'It was nothing', said the Raja, but she said, 'You must tell me.' The Raja said, 'The cowherd turned into stone and if I tell you I will become stone also.' But she said, 'If you don't tell me, I'll take poison and die.'

'Listen', said the Raja. 'A man had a mongoose in his house. One day a snake bit that man's child and killed him. The mongoose killed the snake and went to the jungle for the snake-root. When the man saw his dead child he wept. Presently the mongoose came back. The man thought it was the mongoose which had killed the child; he picked it up and dashed it to the ground. Then he looked in its mouth and saw the snake-root; he searched and found the dead snake. He gave the child the root and he recovered, but who can describe that man's sorrow for his faithful mongoose? That is how you will feel if I turn into stone.'

But the Rani refused to listen. 'Tell me', she said, 'or I will kill myself.'

Then the Raja told her another story. 'A rich man had a dog of which he was very fond. One day he lost all his money and had nothing to eat. He left the dog in pawn with a rich Seth for five hundred rupees. With this money he traded until he became rich again. One day thieves stole some ornaments from the Seth's house and hid them in a tank, but the dog saw them and ran to the Seth saying 'Ku ku ku' and thus led him to the place. The Seth was very pleased and wrote a letter, and tied it with five hundred rupees round the dog's neck and sent it back to its master. But when the master saw it, he thought the dog had run away and was angry and killed it. Afterwards he saw the letter and the five hundred rupees and

became very sad. So too, if I turn into stone you will be sad.'

But the Rani took no notice of all his persuasion. So at last the Raja took her to a shady place in his flower garden by the well. He said, 'Let me sit on your lap and lay my head by yours and then after a little while I will tell you the story and become stone.'

Now as they were sitting there a goat and a she-goat came together to the well. In the well there was some fresh green grass. The she-goat tried to reach it but was afraid of falling in and cried, 'O my husband, bring me that grass and we will both eat it.' The goat said, 'Why don't you get it yourself?' She said, 'But I might fall in.' The goat said, 'Mightn't I also fall in?' 'No', she said, 'you belong to the male caste.' 'Oho', said the goat, 'now I understand. You don't mind if I die, for you can always marry another goat, but I am not such a fool. You can die and there will be lots of she-goats for me to marry.' When he had said this, they both ran away.

When the Raja heard this, he laughed and said to his Rani, 'There goes a wise husband. You may die of poison if you wish or kill yourself with the sword or drown yourself in this well. I am not going to turn myself into stone. I can get lots of wives like you.'

So saying, he went home and after a few minutes his wife followed him and said no more.¹

¹ Another version of this story, relating to the Kojagari Lakshmipuja, is given in the *Vratākatha*, published by the late Babu Ashutosh Mukherjee. See N. Chakravartti, 'An Ancient Indian Story in a Bengali *Vratākatha*', *J.A.S.B.*, xxvi (N.S.), 389-93.

THE REVENGEFUL STORIES

THE basic element in the two stories contained in this Chapter is, I think, to be found in the curious notion that stories known to any individual have a sort of existence of their own and live inside him always anxious to be repeated and thus express themselves. There is a similar idea in the belief that a man who knows a secret cannot contain it, because the secret works like a living thing within him until it bursts forth.

There are several partial parallels to the first story in this Chapter, the closest of which comes from the *Katha Sarit Sagara*. Here we read that a spoilt prince goes with a friend for his marriage and on the way has a wine party on a river bank in the moonlight. After he has gone to bed he begins to tell a story at the solicitation of his nurse but soon after beginning it, being tired and intoxicated, he is overcome with sleep and his nurse also. But the merchant's son keeps awake and after a little while hears in the air what seem to be the voices of women engaged in conversation. The first says, 'This Raja has gone to sleep without telling his tale, therefore I pronounce this curse on him, Tomorrow he shall see a necklace and if he take hold of it, it shall cling to his neck and that moment cause his death.' A second voice prophesies peril from a mango fruit, a third from the falling of a house, the fourth the danger of failing to say 'God bless you' when he sneezes a hundred times. Finally the voice declares that if the person who has heard all this shall inform the Raja of it, he also shall die.

The story goes on to describe how the prince's friend saves him from picking up the necklace, from eating fruit, and from being crushed beneath a falling house. In order to deliver him from death in his bedchamber the friend has to hide beneath the bed and when the prince sneezes a hundred times, each time exclaims 'God bless you'. The prince, however, suspects his friend's motive in entering his bedchamber and has him arrested and condemned to death. But when the friend tells the whole story the prince is satisfied, forgives his friend and they live together in happiness.¹

Similar tales which, however, omit the motif of the neglected, unexpressed stories, have been recorded from Southern

¹ Penzer, iii, 30.

and Western India and from Bengal. In Natesa Sastri's *Dravidian Nights* we again have a prince and a faithful friend. But here it is simply two owls which the friend overhears conversing. The dangers in store are, first, the falling of a tree, then to be swept away in a flood and, thirdly, to be murdered by his own wife. Here too if anyone reveals the secret his head will burst instantly into a thousand pieces. In Day's *Folk-Tales of Bengal*, the faithful friend overhears the talk of two immortal birds who describe how if the king's son rides on an elephant on the morrow, he will fall down and die; if he escapes this danger, as he is passing through the lion-gate of the Palace, it will fall upon him and kill him; if he escapes this, while he is eating his supper the head of a fish will stick in his throat and choke him to death, while finally when he retires with his wife to bed a cobra will come into the room and kill him. Should anyone warn the prince of the danger, he will be turned into a marble stone. The story progresses as we would expect. When the prince finds his friend in his bedroom he threatens to kill him, and the friend can only save his life by telling the story, whereupon he gradually turns into a stone.¹ Miss Frere's story is very similar, but here the friend is turned into stone not as a penalty for revealing the secret but simply as a result of the Raja's reproaches.² In the Bengal story, the friend is reanimated when the prince cuts his new-born child in two and anoints the statue with its blood. So too in our own story the Gond's daughter-in-law dashes her child against the stone and the servant becomes alive again. Miss Frere, who always manages to tone everything down to a very refined level, describes how the stone friend is restored to life at the touch of the hands of the little child. 'At last one day when the child was a year old and was trying to walk, it chanced to be close to the statue, and tottering on its unsteady feet, stretched out its tiny hands and caught hold of the foot of the stone. The Wuzeer instantly came back to life and stooping down seized in his arms the little baby who had rescued him and kissed it.' In the Bengal tale the sacrificed child is restored to life by the help of the Goddess Kali, but this does not happen in the Baiga tale.

In addition to the stories I have given in the text, I have recorded one very similar to the Baiga tale—though it omits the motif of the angry stories—in which the final danger is

¹ Day, 48.

² Frere, 56 ff.

a great Palace ready to fall on the prince when he enters it, from a Bison-horn Maria at Killepal in the Jagdalpur Tahsil of Bastar State.

I

THE UNREPEATED STORIES

A Baiga story from Bohi, Pandaria Zamindari

A Gond peasant kept a farmhand who worked for him in the fields. One day they went together to a distant village to visit the Gond's son who was living there with his wife. They had to sleep in a little hut by the roadside. After they had eaten their supper the farmhand said, 'Tell me a story.' But the Gond was tired and went to sleep, but his servant lay awake, for he knew that his master had four stories which he was too lazy to tell.

After the Gond had been sleeping for a little while, the stories came out of his belly and sitting on his body began to talk to each other. 'This Gond', they said, 'knows us very well, but he will never tell anybody about us. Why should we go on living uselessly in his belly? Let's kill him and go to live with someone else.' The farmhand pretended to be asleep, but listened carefully to everything they said.

Presently, the first story said: 'When the Gond reaches his son's house and sits down to take his supper I'll turn the first mouthful of his food into sharp needles and when he swallows them they'll kill him.'

The second story said: 'I'll become a great tree by the roadside. I'll fall on him as he passes by and kill him that way.'

The third story said: 'I'll be a snake and run up his leg and bite him.'

The fourth story said: 'As he is crossing the river I'll bring a great wave of water and wash him away.'

The next morning the Gond with his servant reached his son's house. His son and daughter-in-law welcomed him and immediately prepared food and set it before him, but as the Gond was raising the first mouthful to his lips his servant knocked it out of his hand, saying, 'There was an insect in the food'. But when they looked they saw all the rice had turned into needles.

The following day they set out on their return journey. There was a great tree leaning across the road and the servant said, 'Let us run past this tree.' As they went by, it fell with a mighty crash, but they just escaped. A little later, they saw a snake in the road, but the servant killed it with his stick. After that, they came to the river and as they were crossing, a great wave came rushing down, but the servant dragged the Gond to safety.

They sat down on the bank to rest, and the Gond said, 'You have saved my life four times. How did you know what was going to happen?' The farmhand said, 'If I tell you I will turn into a stone.' But the Gond said, 'How can you turn into stone? Come, you must tell me.' So his servant said, 'Very well, I'll tell you but when I become a stone, take your daughter-in-law's child and throw it against me and I'll become a man again.'

- So the servant told his story and was turned into a stone, but the Gond left him and went home. After some time, his daughter-in-law heard about it and she went by herself and threw her child against the stone and the servant became alive again. But the Gond refused to have him in his house. That is why few trust the Gond, for it is well said, 'No one can rely on a Gond, a woman, or a dream.'

2

THE RAJA WHO LIKED STORIES

An Agaria story from Motinala, Mandla District

There was a Raja who loved to hear stories. One day he proclaimed that whoever could make him laugh would be given his weight in rupees. People came from all over the kingdom to tell him stories, but the king was bored with them and sent them home.

In the jungle there lived a man with one eye and a withered leg. He tried to remember but could not think of a single story. So he went to a Sadhu, saying, 'If you will tell me a story I will serve you for ever.' The Sadhu knew many stories, but he thought that the blind man would be a poor servant and sent him away. The blind man was very angry and went to the jungle and slept under a mango tree.

Now in the belly of the Sadhu there were four stories: one opened the eyes of the blind; one made the lame to walk; the third made men laugh and the fourth made them cry. That night, when the Sadhu slept, the four stories crept out of his belly and went to the blind man in the jungle. He too was asleep and they crept into his belly. The first story said in the blind man's mind: 'When you reach the sacred earth, you will die.'

When this entered his mind his eyes were opened. He was very surprised at this but went to sleep again. Then the second story said, 'Whatever good you have done will pass into your feet', and he was cured of his lameness. The third story said, 'You've tied it above, you beat it below', and he began to laugh.

The fourth story said, '*Sar sat sar sat*'.

All these words remained in his mind while he slept but when he awoke he had forgotten everything except the words of the third story. As he had forgotten the words of the first and second stories he became blind and lame again. But remembering the words of the third he could not stop laughing and went to the Palace to tell the Raja.

Now the Raja was sitting angry and disappointed and would talk to no one, but when the blind man told him the words of the third story he began to laugh. He asked the bystanders the meaning of the words and they said 'Let this blind man tell his story and we will be able to understand.'

The blind man could hardly speak for laughing, but he told his story as well as he could. 'A Raja had a poor man as his friend. They suspected that their wives were unfaithful to them. Whenever the Raja went hunting, he used to tie his wife's hairs into a bun. His friend used to measure his wife's parts with his fingers.

'One day each visited his friend's wife. When they met again they were boasting how they had kept their wives faithful. But the poor man roared with laughter crying, "You may tie it above, you beat it below. How can you tell whether your wife is faithful or not?"'

When the Raja heard this story he was very amused and gave the blind man his own weight in rupees.

DOMESTIC TALES

THESE tales, which are typical of a great many homely folk-tales of much sociological interest, are closer to the everyday life of the people than any of the others and have fewer parallels in tales recorded from other parts of India. Many of them are rough and coarse as aboriginal life itself. Some, especially those dealing with the remarkable motif of the Vagina Dentata and others which are particularly concerned with the more intimate aspects of the sexual relationship, I have recorded elsewhere. The remainder are presented in this Chapter.

The youth who does not know how to possess his wife is a stock figure of Baiga humour and the cause of much fescennine amusement. So are the quarrels between elder and junior wives and stories where a Sadhu cuckolds the hero by promising his wife medicine.

Story 2 is a characteristic Baiga boasting tale showing Gond and even Brahmin girls fascinated by the sexual potency of the hillmen and desiring to be admitted into the tribe. In Story 4, we have the husband who hides behind an image and pretends to represent the deity—an old and obvious trick, which is found in the *Jataka* (98), where a man gets his father to hide in a hollow tree and thus, impersonating the Tree Spirit, to give a decision in his favour. In the *Katha Sarit Sagara* (ii, 40) a thief's father hides in a tree and gives evidence for him, but is smoked out by the police.

Nearest to the story in the text is a tale recorded by Swynnerton about a man whose wife prays every night at a fakir's grave that her husband may go blind. The man hides there and declares that if she feeds her husband with sweet pudding and roast fowl he will be blind in a week. The story ends happily.¹ The Ho tale of 'The Cunning Potter',² however, is as tragic as the Muria version.

Most of these tales are on the side of virtue, but in another Muria tale recorded elsewhere an old man manages to seduce his own daughter-in-law by this method and escapes unpunished.

Story 5 is an interesting variant on the same theme.

¹ Swynnerton, *The Adventures of Raja Rasalu*, 138.

² Bompas, 482.

I

THE SADHU'S MEDICINE

A Baiga story from Kenda Zamindari, Bilaspur District

An old Baiga and his wife lived in the jungle with one daughter. One day the Baiga said, 'How are we to marry our girl? Let us keep a Lamsena in the house, and he will look after us and feed us, and in the end he can marry our daughter.' His wife was pleased at his saying, so the old man went out and found a handsome boy who was very poor and brought him home.

The old man asked his wife, 'Do you like him? Is he what you want for a son-in-law?' And he asked his daughter, 'Will you have him? Tell me, and if you wish I will find someone else.' But the girl said, 'What you like, I like.'

Everyday the Baiga and his wife went to cut the jungle and the Lamsena went to graze the goats. The girl stayed at home and cooked the gruel and roots when there were any. The Lamsena used to sleep with his goats. He never went near the girl.

After three years, the Baiga decided to marry the Lamsena to his daughter. The Lamsena had learnt how goats do it, but no one had ever taught him the ways of men. After the marriage, they began to sleep together, but for a long time the Lamsena did not go near his wife, not knowing what to do.

Then the girl abused him. 'Are you a corpse?' she said. 'If you're impotent or frightened, I'll get another husband.' Hearing this, the boy went to her, but like a goat. For two or four days the girl bore this, then she said, 'What a mad fool you are! Lie down and I'll show you what to do.'

The Lamsena said, 'No, no. I won't lie down.' Thus said the Lamsena. But the girl said, 'Don't be frightened. I won't do anything. I only want to show you.' So the boy lay down and the girl showed him what to do. At once the boy understood, and he seized the girl and put her under him. Then the girl said, 'Now you do it very well.'

After a few days, the girl became pregnant and in due time a boy was born. They were all out sowing seed in the bewar when this happened. After a time the Baiga sent the Lamsena to the

bazaar to buy a sari and a jacket for the girl, and salt and tobacco for the house. He gave the boy money and sent him to the bazaar.

In the bazaar was a very beautiful Baigin, and the boy bought her a pundara, and some anklets for her feet, and a good ring so that she would always remember him. He spent all his money on her, and lived with her for two or four days. Then he took her home with him, and told his father that he had brought a junior wife who would do all the work of the house. Hearing this, the Baiga was very pleased, and they prepared turmeric water and got some liquor and coconuts, and in the evening the boy put new bangles on his new wife and they poured the water over them and ate the coconut and all got drunk. So they were married.

Then the Lamsena began to sleep with his two wives. The elder said, 'Come and sleep with me.' But the Lamsena wanted to sleep with the new girl. He had to go once, however, to his first, but he left her as soon as he could and went to his second. Then the first began to quarrel. She screamed, 'Come back, or I'll throw the fire from the hearth over you.'

So the Lamsena had to spend some time with his first, and after that he slept as much as he liked with the new wife. But still the first used to quarrel. So the old man said, 'Go my son and guard the bewar. Drive away all pigs and sambhar who come there.' The Lamsena was pleased when he heard that and he took his second and went and stayed with her very happily in the jungle. Soon she too was pregnant.

After a time, the Lamsena went to see his parents. His first put rice in a pot for him and he set out. He stayed with his parents for a long time. In his absence, many things happened. The old Baiga and his wife ate a great deal of kutki and roots and got drunk on it. They could not relieve themselves and swelled up and died. Both the children also died. So the girls were left quite alone. Soon two Baiga travellers came by and stayed in the house. There was no one about, and they took the girls by force, though they did not need to use very much force.

Then the Lamsena came home with his brother, his uncle and three friends. When he saw the strangers living with his wives, he was very angry and lifted up his stick to beat them. But they shouted 'Thief! Thief!' and said 'This is our house, get out of it'.

The Lamsena was frightened and would have gone away, but his second who really loved him, came weeping and told the whole story. Then they beat the two strangers and drove them out.

But the Lamsena sent his second to his mother's house with his younger brother. On the way, the younger brother caught her, but she escaped from him and ran back to the Lamsena who was angry and said, 'Now I will never be parted from you'.

One day a Sadhu came begging to the house. When he saw the younger wife he decided to stay there. He made great friends with the Lamsena. 'Have you any children?' he asked. 'I had one but he died.' Then said that Sadhu, 'I'll try to give you a son.' The Lamsena was very pleased and fell at the Sadhu's feet. The Sadhu said, 'Send your wife to me at midnight and you yourself come at cock-crow and I'll give you both medicine.'

At midnight, the Lamsena sent his second to the Sadhu and the Sadhu enjoyed her. The girl was pleased and said to herself, 'This Sadhu has good medicine.' When the Lamsena came, the Sadhu pretended to be angry and said, 'You have come too late. We must do this again. Come tomorrow night at supper time, and send your first wife at midnight and your second at cock-crow.'

Now the Sadhu had some poison with him, and when the Lamsena came, he gave him some and the boy died. The Sadhu covered him with a cloth and put him in a corner. Then the Sadhu put his iron tongs in the fire and made it red-hot. When the first wife came, he made her lie down, and told her to shut her eyes while he gave her the medicine. Then he thrust the red-hot tongs into her and pushed it up until it came out of her mouth. Then he pulled it out and laid her body underneath her husband's.

At dawn came the second. 'Look', said the Sadhu, 'how they love each other. Nothing can wake them!' When the girl saw them sleeping together like that she was angry and went to the Sadhu, and they ran away together to the Hill of Elephants where he had his temple and worshipped all the gods.

2

THE BAIGA PRINCE

A Baiga story from Kawardha State

Long ago a Baiga Raja ruled in Chandagarh. One day he went out to find a wife for his son. He came to Bairagarh, where there was a Gond Raja, and asked for his daughter. The Gond Raja said, 'Here is a spear. Whoever can bear a blow from it without being injured may marry my daughter.' So saying, the Gond Raja killed the Baiga Raja. Then he cut off his head and tied it to the door-post and threw the body into the tank, and the next morning he cleared his throat and spat on the head.

The Baiga prince, when he heard the story, was very sad. He went to his mother and asked her to cook him some food for the journey. The boy got his horse ready, and set out for Bairagarh. On the way a cotton tree stopped him, and told him not to go on, for the Gond Raja would certainly catch him in a snare and hang him. But the Baiga prince took no notice and went on to Bairagarh. When he got there he shouted outside the door, 'Mama, Ho!' When he knew who it was, the Gond Raja was frightened, but he went to the boy and said, 'If you can bear a blow from my spear, you may marry my daughter.' He struck the prince on the chest, but the spear bent as though it had hit a rock, and the boy was uninjured. The Gond Raja thought, 'He is sure to kill me, but I will marry my daughter to him. Perhaps she will save me.'

The prince said, 'Show me where my father is.' But the Raja refused. So the Baiga began to search, and he searched until he had collected every little bone of his father's body. He spread them out on a cloth of seven folds, seven folds above and seven folds below, and said, 'If you are in truth my father, stand up alive.' And his father stood up alive.

On the bank of the lake, the Baiga made a tent full of the magic of love. When they saw it, all the beautiful village girls ran to it. The Baiga put each girl into a separate room, and went to visit each one separately asking, 'What is the snare that the Raja uses to catch his enemies? Tell me, or I'll rob you of your honour.' But it was not for fear of him, but because they

loved him, that they told him. Then he said, 'Go away.' But they refused to go, for they were all dying for love of him because of the magic. The Baiga said, 'I am alone. Which of you shall I catch? You are so many; what am I to do?' At last he let them stay, but made them all lie down, and tested them to find which were virgins. Only one girl was a virgin: she was a Brahmin. All the others he turned out, and they went away weeping. The magic of the love-tent was such that when they did not see it, they forgot their love, but when they looked towards the lake and saw it, the love returned.

The Brahmin girl sat resting in the tent of love-magic. Then the Gond princess came and when she saw the Brahmin she was very angry, and cried, 'I'll push a burning stick into you. After that I'll stuff it full of ground salt and chillies. If you don't want that, be off with you, and live with your father's goat.'

Then the Baiga came in. 'Why are you fighting?' he said. 'I am a king. I do what I like. Lie down both of you. I am going to test you again. If either of you is not a virgin I'll kill your parents. For it is their fault. They should have married you while you were still young, so that you wouldn't have been to so many men.' When he tested them, he found that the Gondin had been to men, but the Brahmin girl was a virgin. So he killed the Raja of Bairagarh. And taking the two girls and his father he went back to Chandagarh.

There both girls were admitted into the Baiga tribe, after the Raja had given a great feast to everyone, and they lived happily together. The Gondin became his first, for she was older, and the Brahmin girl was his second. Their parents were also brought and admitted into the Baiga tribe.

3

THE LAMSENA

A Baiga story from Balaghat District

An old Baiga widow lived alone with her daughter. Although the girl was not married, there was a child in her belly. So to save her name the mother kept a Lamsena boy in the house. But

whenever he went to the girl she abused him and refused to lie with him. For she had no love for him. After this had happened two or four times, the boy decided to run away, but the mother heard of it and said, 'Don't run away. My daughter is mad. Try once again.' So the boy went again to the girl, and the mother watched through a crack in the wall. He caught her breasts and tried to force her legs apart, but she prevented him. Then he came out very angry and said to the mother, 'If she won't let me have her, when the baby is born I will tell everyone that it is not mine.'

The mother was very angry, but she persuaded the Lamsena to wait one more night. They both hid behind the partition of the house, and in the night they saw another man come. When these two were at the work, the Lamsena went in and caught them. The old mother had put salt and chillies ready. The Lamsena beat the other man and drove him out, and they abused the girl, and put some salt and chillies in her, but not very much, for she cried out, 'From today I'll always go to my Lamsena and love him.'

Then the girl began to live with the Lamsena, and he worked in the fields and fetched wood. After a time the baby was born, and when it could talk, the villagers said, 'Certainly it is the child of the Lamsena.' But the boy said, 'I am not his son. My father is a Gond.' So the villagers went to the girl and asked her, 'Has any other man been to you?' 'Never', she said. 'My man is the Lamsena and no other.'

After a few days the child died, and after his death the old mother married her daughter to the Lamsena. But directly after the marriage, the girl ran away with her Gond lover. The Lamsena killed himself by taking poison.

After that the old woman lived all alone. She went from village to village searching for her daughter. And her two eyes broke for weeping. Then she too died.

But the Gond and the Baigin went to live in a Gond village, and said that they were both Gond. So the villagers shared their pipes with him and ate from her hands. After some time a child was born to them, and when it could talk the first thing it said was, 'I am a Baiga. My father is a Gond, but my mother is a Baigin.' When they heard that, the villagers refused to eat with them any longer. And the child died.

Then the Baigin left her Gond lover, and ran away with a Chamar. It was the beginning of the rains. The Gond followed them till he came to a wide river. They were on the far bank, but the river came down in flood, and the Gond was carried away and drowned.

So the Chamar took the Baigin home. One day he brought some beef and told the girl to cook it. She cooked it but when the time for eating came she refused. Then the Chamar said, 'If you won't eat with me, don't live with me any longer. Go away.' Full of sorrow, the girl went to the jungle weeping bitterly. But a jackal met her, and said, 'Auntie, why are you weeping? Has my uncle beaten you?' 'May he be burnt to ashes', she cried. 'No, no, I'll go and kill him', said the jackal. The girl was very pleased and went with the jackal. But the jackal wanted her as a mate for his friend, a tiger who lived in that jungle. He took her to the tiger's den, but the tiger was out fetching wood from the forest. There was a lot of meat in the den, and the jackal said, 'Eat what you like, and I'll go and get you some milk.' But he really went to fetch the tiger. The Baigin took some of the meat and ran away to a Baiga village near by.

In that village a Baiga girl had died, and the husband took her instead. But on her womb there was the mark of a Gond, the mark of a Chamar and the mark of a jackal. The Gond's mark was like a hempen thread. It had a seed in it. The Chamar's mark was like the bone of a cow. The jackal had left the marks of its teeth. Once the Baiga undressed his girl in the day-time, and saw the marks and understood them by his magic. But he said nothing, only he thought to himself, 'If you have been to a Gond and a Chamar and a jackal, then you will deceive me also one day. So I won't love you too much.' And he waited.

After a time, the girl saw a young and handsome Baiga boy, and decided that she must have him. She called to the boy during the Karma dance, 'Come to me.' And when the line of girls came near the boys in the dance he put out his hand and touched her breasts in the dark. He went to her two or four times in the house, while the husband was out digging. At last they ran away together. As they were going through the jungle, they met a bear. It had dug a pit and its head was down burrowing in the mud. When they saw it, they were very frightened, but the girl said, 'Whether

I die or not, I'm going to bury that bear.' So she did, but by the time she had killed it, it was dark and they had to sleep under the trees.

In the morning they came to a village. They were mad for each other. They lived there; they cut bewar and dug roots in the jungle. After a time a boy was born. He was blind in one eye. When he was old enough, they married him. One day after the marriage, the Baiga went to cut bewar, but he did not make the proper offerings and a tiger killed him. For two or four days the girl watched the path, and at last someone came and told her what had happened. Then she went to the forest and in the place where her lover had been killed she took poison and died.

4

THE CLEVER HUSBAND

A Kuruk story from Chitrakot, Bastar State

A Rawat and his wife had no children and the woman went one day to the temple of Mahadeo to ask for the gift of a son. She went again and again, and soon the villagers noticed that the Rawatain went daily to the temple, and told her husband.

One day the Rawat went to the temple first and hid there. When the woman came, he heard her say, 'O Mahadeo, Mahadeo, give me the boon I beg for: make my husband blind and lame so that I can go and get another man who will give me a son.' Then from within, the Rawat spoke in the voice of Mahadeo, 'O woman, what gift will you bring me? Bring me an offering, and then I will grant your boon.'

Hearing this the Rawatain hurried to her house and took money for the bazaar where she bought sweets, plantains, milk, ghee, coconuts, supari. The next day early in the morning, she bathed and took all these gifts to the temple. But the Rawat got there first and hid. Again the woman cried, 'O Mahadeo, Mahadeo, give me the boon I have asked for. Make my husband blind and lame so that I can leave him and get another man who will give me a son.' Then said the husband, 'What have you brought for me?' The woman put all the things before Mahadeo, and she kindled a fire

and offered incense. Then said the Rawat, 'Your boon is granted; your husband shall be blind and lame and you shall be free.'

The woman went home happy, and the Rawat came from the temple and ate all the food save for a little which he tied up and hid in a tree. Then he went home and calling the neighbours told them the story, and in the presence of them all killed his wife.

5

THE RESOURCEFUL WIFE

A Pardhan story from Patangarh, Mandla District

A woman was so mad with love for her lover that she gave him all the rice in the bin, and had to fill it with chaff so that her husband would not notice what she had done. By and by the days for sowing came round, and the woman knew she could no more deceive her husband.

One day her husband went to plough his field which lay near a tank. The next morning his wife went very early to the tank, made herself naked and smeared mud all over her body. She sat down in the grass waiting for him. When he came, she suddenly stood up and in a loud voice cried, 'I am going to take away your two bullocks. But if you need them you can give me the grain in your bin and I will fill it with chaff instead. But one or the other I must have, for I am hungry.'

The man at once said that the Goddess—for so he thought her—should take the grain, for he knew he would be ruined if he lost his bullocks. 'Very well', said the wife. 'Go back now to your house, and you will find that I have taken your grain, but I have put chaff in its place.' So saying she disappeared into the tank.

The man ran home and found in fact that all the grain was gone and his bin was full of chaff. His wife quickly bathed and changed her clothes, and came home by way of the well where she told the other women the story with great pride.

6

THE RANI'S LOVER

A Muria story from Bayanar, Bastar State

There was a Raja and his wife. From the time of his marriage the Raja did not once allow his Rani to go to visit her mother's house. So she was very angry and for many days refused to eat her food. At last, after two or four months, the Raja gave way and allowed her to get ready to go to her mother's house.

As they went on their way, they came to a country where there was no water. For twelve miles behind them there was no water, and for twelve miles before them. But they found a well walled with wood and full of water, underneath a mango tree. There was a Fakir playing on a fiddle. The Rani said, 'These are the hot days; there is no water behind us or before; let us cook our food here and eat and rest.' The Raja went to bathe and the Rani prepared food for him and he ate and slept. But the eyes of the Rani and the Fakir met and love came to them.

The Rani said, 'I will come with you anywhere, I must be with you because of love.' He said, 'How can I go away with a Raja's wife? He will certainly kill me.' Then he said, 'Whatever I tell you, you must do it. Then you can come with me.' The Rani said, 'Tell me what it is and I will do it.' 'Say to your husband that you are thirsty. Then when he takes you to the well, push him in.'

So the Rani woke her Raja and said, 'Raja, I am thirsty, come with me to the well.' The Raja got up and went with her to the well for water. But as he lowered the bucket into the well, the Rani pushed him in, and ran back to the Fakir.

So the two lovers ran away together, and made their living by dancing and singing from village to village.

But the Raja was not dead. He caught hold of a rock and lay in the water; he did not drown but neither was he able to climb out. By and by there came a Lamana with cattle loaded with sacks of oil-seed and wheat. This Lamana came to the well, and lowered the bucket for water. The Raja caught hold of the bucket. The Lamana pulled at it, but it did not come up. He looked down and

saw hands grasping the rope. He called his companions for help. They came running and pulled up the Raja, blind and deaf from the water. They laid him in the sun, and after two days he was well again. Now he wept and told the Lamana what had happened. The Lamana told him to return to his kingdom, but the Raja said, 'No, you have saved my life, I will stay with you as your servant.'

The Raja went on with the Lamana until they reached home. Now to that very city had come the Fakir and the Rani dancing and singing in the street. The people of that city were very pleased with the Rani's dancing, and so was the Raja of that city. When the Rani's husband saw his wife, he recognized her, and she saw him and knew him. She was very afraid, for she thought she had killed him in the well. But neither said a word, they remained silent.

The Fakir and the Rani danced and sang all night and next morning were preparing to leave for another village. The Raja of that place asked them what reward they would like. The Rani said, 'There is a Lamana in your city; he has a servant; have that servant hanged; that is all the reward we want.' So the Raja sent his police to fetch that Lamana's servant. The Raja-servant was frightened, but the Lamana went with him to help him. The Raja said, 'I am going to have you hanged.' The Raja-servant stood before the Raja of that city with folded hands and said, 'Hear my story and then hang me.'

Then the Raja-servant said, 'I am really the Raja of another land. I had a Rani. I never had let her go to her mother's house.' And he told the whole story of what had happened. The Raja asked the Lamana if the story was true and the Lamana said that he had certainly taken the Raja out of the well and saved his life.

The Raja had an iron pillar made and made the Fakir stand on one side and the faithless Rani on the other, and drove iron nails through their bodies into the pillar. So they died, and the Raja gave the Raja-servant his own daughter for wife and sent him back to his kingdom with great honour.

7

THE TOO-HELPFUL MONKEY

A Doma story from Murnula, Bastar State

A boy lived in a village with his mother. She used to earn enough food for them both and so she kept her son. When he grew up, his mother said, 'I have got two or four rupees from my work. Take this money and buy a bullock.' The boy took the rupees and went to find a bullock.

As he went along he met a crowd of monkeys, and he thought them bullocks. He said to himself, 'Why should I waste my money, I will catch one of these animals and take it home.' He caught a monkey and when he got home, tied it to a pole outside the house. When his mother asked if he had brought a bullock, he said, 'Yes, mother, it is tied outside.' So the old woman went to see it and found a monkey. At this she gave much abuse to her son and picked up a stick to beat the monkey.

But the monkey said, 'O mother, don't beat me. I will do your work for you.' So the mother said, 'Very well, go and find a wife for my son.' The monkey went to find a wife for the boy.

As it went through the jungle it came to the place where an old Raksin lived. The monkey went to her in the shape of a Brahmin. She said to the monkey, 'I have a daughter. I desire greatly to marry her soon, for before long I will die.' The monkey said, 'Give me your daughter and I'll take her and get her married.' Hearing this, the old Raksin prepared her daughter and gave the monkey many rupees, so that he went away well pleased with the girl and the money.

When he reached home, he said, 'Here is the girl, but what are these things?' And he spread the rupees before the old woman. The woman took them and hid them in the house, and gave the monkey a fine feast. Then she prepared the marriage for her son.

After the marriage, the boy and his wife slept together in a corner of the hut. Now both boy and girl had teeth where no teeth should be, and when they lay together the boy killed his wife, but he in turn was mutilated.

The boy cried out, 'O mother, mother! What has happened

to me?' and he ran all bleeding to his mother. Then his mother looked at the dead body of her daughter-in-law and the bleeding body of her son, and wept loudly, crying, 'O monkey, monkey!' The monkey came and the old mother said, 'Look, what has happened. Go and get another girl for my son.' The monkey went and found another girl and brought her to the house.

Now the boy married this new girl. But he thought in his mind, 'Here am I mutilated; what am I to do?' But he still had his teeth and with these he killed his new wife also. Again he wept, crying, 'O mother, mother! What has happened to your son?' The old woman went to see, then called the monkey once more. 'Bring me another girl for my son.' So said the old woman.

The monkey ran hard through the jungle and quickly brought another girl. She too was married and she too was killed. Now the monkey grew very angry, and when it brought a fourth girl, it waited till nightfall, and collected a lot of wood. It piled the wood outside the room in which the boy was sleeping with his wife, in which too the old woman slept. Then it set fire to the house and all those people were killed.

8

THE BOY-GIRL AND THE GIRL-BOY

A Gond story from Phuljhar Zamindari

In a certain village lived an old man and his wife. They had one son. Soon after they had arranged his marriage, they both died. Now the son's wife was so afraid of him that she would not even go to urinate without his permission. One day the youth went to the forest to cut wood. His wife desired to piss, but she did not dare go out of the house. At last she could endure no more, so she made a leaf-cup and pissed in that. She hid the cup in the hole of the grain-bin.

By and by a man called Dhamkan came by and looking in asked the girl what her husband had told her to do. 'When you have pissed, cook me some vegetable', so said the girl. 'Then why don't you do what your husband said', asked Dhamkan, and he went away. The girl thought she must make vegetable curry out

of the leaf-cup and the urine. She got it ready, and when her husband came in, gave it to him to eat. 'There's a lot of salt in this curry', he said. 'I've only done what you told me to do.' Then he thought, 'If we can get so much salt from our own urine, why buy it in the bazaar?' So after that they always prepared their food with their own urine.

One day the man called Dhamkan came again and roared with laughter. 'This girl eats urine!' They were ashamed and went to live in the jungle. There was a great rock and a cave below it. They lived there and there a daughter was born to them, many daughters were born. The father thought, 'Why have I no sons?' He gave all his daughters to a Raja. The Raja wanted a boy, so they pretended that one of the girls was a boy and took her to the Palace at night. The Raja knew she was a girl, but decided to accept her as his son. He gave the other girls back to their father.

Near the Palace lived an old woman with many sons but no daughter. She pretended one of the boys was a girl and dressed him in a sari and put on him girl's ornaments. When he grew up, she married him. When 'she' went to sleep with 'her' husband, both were frightened. They cried, 'We both have the same parts. What are we to do?'

One day many women went to bathe together in a tank, and this boy went with them. Some one cried, 'Let us all bathe naked.' The boy refused and the women began to pull off his clothes. The boy said, 'Wait a little, I must go to piss.' He went to a mahua tree, and there was the girl who had been sent to the Raja's house as a boy. She had run away and had taken the form of a clitoris bird. The boy wept and told her his story. The bird said, 'Don't weep. Give me your parts for a little while, and I will lend you mine.' They exchanged their parts, and when the boy went back to the tank and became naked they saw he was a girl. He went home and the husband was well pleased.

The clitoris bird waited for a long time, then she saw that the boy had deceived her. So she took her human form again, and now she was a boy. She returned to the Palace, and the Raja was very pleased when he found he had a son and married him with great honour.

9

THE RAJA'S YOUNG WIFE

A Gond story from Phuljhar Zamindari

A Raja had two sons. After the birth of the second the mother died. When the boys were mature, the Raja said in his mind, 'Shall I get a wife for myself or for my children?' He called his sons—now he was old, but they were young and strong—and said, 'Shall I get a wife for myself or for you?' They replied, 'Get a wife for yourself and we will call her mother.'

The Raja found a lovely young girl and married her. But as he kissed her on the mouth as if she was a child, he died. It was as he was lying on her, lost in love, and kissed her as if she was a little child. Thus the Raja died.

The boys thought, 'The girl was really for us. But our father took her, and he has died for his sin.' So the two boys argued as to which should marry her. The younger said, 'You have her, and I'll call her *bhauji*.' Both the boys embraced her, but the elder married her and slept with her every day. Then one night, from her mouth came a snake small as a thread. But out in the room it became huge and swallowed the elder brother.

The younger boy was sleeping near by; he saw what had happened. He took his sword and cut the snake into three parts. But while cutting up the snake, he also cut off one of his brother's legs. The boy was very angry. He got out of the snake's body and stuck the leg that had been cut off into his wife. She died, the leg stuck on the boy again, and when he tried to pull it out, he found he was caught. There he was joined to the body of his dead wife.

But the younger boy cut open the girl's belly and they took out the leg, and both boys, very sad in their minds, ran away. They met a Dano in the forest. He had a very beautiful daughter. But she lived beyond the seven seas and sixteen streams. The Dano tried to devour the boys, but they killed him, and as he was dying he cried, 'You have killed me; kill my daughter too.'

The brothers went to find the girl, but they could not cross the sea. The elder boy could swim; at last he got to the other side. But the younger could not swim and he sat on the bank weeping

bitterly. At last a tortoise carried him across. The elder brother married the Dano's daughter, and the younger worshipped the tortoise as his god.

10

THE GIRL AND THE COW

A Ganda story from Patandadar, Raipur District

An old woman had one daughter. She would never let the girl go anywhere, and at night she slept beside her holding her hand over her parts for fear some man would come to the house.

One night a man covered himself with a blanket, tied a bell round his neck, and went into the garden near the house. Presently he shook a tree and his bell tinkled. 'Here is a cow eating the brinjals.' So thought the woman. 'Go, daughter and drive it away.' She removed her hand, and the girl went out and shouted at the cow. The man whispered to her. She came back and lay down by her mother.

After a little while, the man shook the tree again and his bell tinkled. 'That dirty cow is back again. Tomorrow I will abuse the neighbours.' So thought the woman. 'Go, daughter and drive it away.' She removed her hand, and the daughter went out and chased the cow round the garden. The man whispered again. The girl came back and lay down by her mother.

A third time the man shook the tree and his bell tinkled. 'Go daughter and drive it away, drive it right away this time, out of our field into the neighbour's tobacco-patch.' She removed her hand and the girl chased the cow out of the garden and did not come back for a long time.

When she came back, she lay down by her mother, and when the old woman put her hand, 'Ah, mother, it is perspiration', so said her daughter.

II

THE OLD WOMAN AND HER TWO GRAND-DAUGHTERS

A Gond story from Patangarh, Mandla District

Two grand-daughters always slept with their grandmother in the same room. Whenever the old woman got up to piss, the girls went with her. The old woman did it quickly and easily as falling leaves; the girls took a long time over it. One day said the girls, 'O grannie, why do you do it so quickly? How do you make the noise *jhar jhar jhar*? We take much longer, and it sounds *seir seir seir*.'

The old woman said, 'No, children, the wounds made by the spear of a man and a spear of iron are the same, but the wound of the iron spear heals quickly, but that made by man never heals.' 'But when will we see these spears, grannie?' 'All in good time, children.'

When they went back to bed the old woman soon began to snore, but the girls lay awake trembling with fright. 'If we stay here', one said, 'men will pierce us with their spears, just as they have pierced poor grannie; we'd better run away.'

At cock-crow, they got up and escaped from the house. As they went along to another country, they asked every man they met, 'Have you a spear? Do you know how to use it?' Some laughed, some were embarrassed, some abused them, but all said 'Yes.' And hearing this the two girls quickened their pace, glad at their wisdom in leaving so dangerous a land.

At last they came to a great forest. In a clearing a clever orphan Panka was ploughing alone. The girls saw him and said, 'Little brother, have you a spear? Do you know how to use it?' Now this boy was a Panka, so he replied cautiously, 'I don't know what you mean. What spear is this?' The girls said, 'Have you then no spear?' 'I've never heard of such a thing', said the boy. The girls looked at each other and said, 'This boy doesn't know anything about it; it will be quite safe to live with him.'

The girls told him their story and he was glad indeed to get such good company and help in his house-work. Soon he began to love them and he thought in his mind how he could attain his desire. 'I must not frighten them away', he said.

One day the boy asked the eldest girl to bring his food to him

in the field, for, he said, 'I want to finish the whole field today.' Now when he ploughed this boy usually used to plough naked, for there was no one to see. When he saw the girl coming he pierced the bullocks *barach barach* with his goad, and they ran *bar bar bar*. 'O sister, they are afraid of your red sari. Take it off, and bring me the gruel.'

The girl took off her sari and came naked to him with the gruel. She served him and sat down before him. As he was eating she watched him. 'O brother, what is that poor little thing doing going up and down?' 'O sister, it is hungry.' 'What does it eat, brother?' 'It grazes between the thighs.' 'Then let the poor creature have its food.' Slowly and gently he let it graze between her thighs.

At that moment a hawk swooped overhead. The boy cried, 'The hawk will catch it. Where can we hide it?' So saying he hid it. The girl cried, 'You are killing me.' But the boy said, 'Wait till the hawk goes away.'

After this, the elder sister used to bring the boy his food every day. One day the younger sister wanted to take it, but she abused her. When the girl reached the clearing, she used always to remove her clothes for fear of frightening the bullocks, and every day she would search the sky for a hawk. When the hawk swooped down, she would cry, 'O hide it, hide it quickly, or the hawk will carry it away.'

Presently the boy won the younger sister in the same way, and thus married them both. After a time they went to see the old grandmother, and now when they went to piss they all made the same noise *jhar jhar jhar*. When the old woman heard it, she laughed and said, 'You see there is no country where we women are not wounded.'

12

THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

A Pardhan story from Patangarh, Mandla District

An old man and woman had two children. The old mother went out to find a girl for her eldest son. After searching for many days, she found a girl, and returning home she began the work of husking

and grinding. She was so busy doing this that she forgot to clean the cattle-shed. When all was ready she called the guests for the marriage and brought her daughter-in-law home.

Early next morning, she asked the girl to clean the cattle-shed. It was midday before the girl could even collect the dung in the middle of the shed. When the time came for throwing it out, she was too tired to do so, and she sang to her mother-in-law,

‘I said to Manjo, O Manjo,
I cannot work any longer,
I cannot throw out the cow-dung,
O mother, what shall I do?’

And the mother-in-law replied,

‘I said to my daughter, O daughter,
There is but one basket
Of cow-dung in the shed.’

As she sang this, the cow-dung increased still more, and the girl became still more weary. Then she sang to her own father,

‘I said to my father, O father,
Come and help me a little, father.’

The father heard this away in his own house, and said in his mind, ‘O cow-dung, be thrown away quickly.’ Directly he said this, the girl was able to throw away all the cow-dung and was no longer weary. Then she sang to her mother-in-law,

‘I said to Manjo, O Manjo,
Bring out the pot, O Manjo,
And I will go for water.’

The old woman who had been sitting idly got up, dusting her bottom with her hands, and brought the biggest earthen pot which had been lying unused in the house for years and was occupied by many ghosts. It had never been washed and had nothing in it but dirt and spider’s webs. The girl took it and went to the river, cleaned it, and filled it with water. But when she tried to lift it up, it would not be lifted on account of the ghosts. So the girl sang,

‘I said to Manjo, O Manjo,
I cannot lift this great pot by myself.’

And the old woman replied,

‘I said to my daughter-in-law, O daughter-in-law,
It is only a little pot, my daughter.’

The girl struggled and struggled, but she found the pot growing heavier and heavier. Then she sang to her father,

‘I said to my father, O father,
Come help me lift this pot.’

The father heard this away in his own house, and said in his mind, ‘O pot, be lifted quickly.’ Directly he said this, the girl was able to lift the pot and put it on her head.

But when she reached the house, and tried to lift it off her head, it would not come down because of the ghosts that were in it. So the girl sang,

‘I said to Manjo, O Manjo,
I cannot take this pot from my head.’

And the old woman replied,

‘I said to my daughter-in-law, O daughter-in-law,
It is only a little pot, my daughter.’

The girl tried to remove it, but the pot only weighed her down the more. Then she sang to her father,

‘I said to my father, O father,
Come help me down with this pot.’

The father heard this away in his own house, and said in his mind, ‘O pot, be lifted quickly from her head.’ Directly he said this, the girl was able to lift the pot from her head.

Then the girl went in to cook. She prepared pej-gruel, pulse and vegetables. She put the food in pots ready to take it to her husband; not a thing was forgotten, every leaf was there, the salt, the chillies, the chutney, the gourd of water. As the girl went towards the fields, she came to a flooded river. She went into the water, but the stream was so strong that she was frightened and she returned to the bank. Then she sang to her mother-in-law,

‘I said to Manjo, O Manjo,
I cannot cross the rushing river.’

The old woman replied,

‘I said to my daughter-in-law, O daughter-in-law,
It is but a little stream, O daughter.’

Now her husband was burning with anger because the food was late. He stood on the other bank, but would not look at her. The girl sang,

‘I said to my lord, O lord,
I cannot cross the rushing river.’

But her husband made no reply. Then the girl sang to her father,

‘I said to my father, O father,
Come and help me over the river.’

The father heard this away in his own house and said in his mind, ‘O river, let her pass.’ Directly he said this, the waters grew less and the girl was able to cross over. But when the girl came to the field she could not remove the pots from her head, and she sang to her husband,

‘I said to my husband, O husband,
I cannot take the pots from my head.’

The husband, being angry, took no notice, but his younger brother came forward eagerly to help her. The husband shouted at him, ‘Leave her alone; don’t touch her.’ Then the girl sang to her father,

‘I said to my father, O father,
Come and help me lift down the pots.’

The father heard this away in his own house and said in his mind, ‘O pots, be lifted quickly from her head.’ Directly he said this, she was able to put the pots of food on the ground. When she did this, her husband seized her and dragged her to the plough. He yoked her to one side and a bullock to the other. Then he drove her five times round the field. When he untied her, she ran away like a mad woman. The younger brother followed her, crying, ‘Don’t run away, sister, don’t run away.’ So the two ran together for a great distance.

That night the girl and her husband’s younger brother stayed together in a village by the way. The girl sold her ornaments and bought a store of bangles, and they went from place to place selling

bangles for their living. As she put the bangles on the hands of those who bought, she used to sing, and this singing was so beautiful that many came to her. Some paid with money, some with grain. So they went on and on till one day she reached her parents' house. At first they did not know her, but when they heard her sing and she told her story, the mother recognized her and clasped her to her belly. Then those two lived in the house as husband and wife, and were happy.

13

THE PROUD KING

A Pardhan story from Patangarh, Mandla District

There was once a very proud Raja. Whenever he returned to his home from hunting or a journey, and his wife had greeted him by touching his feet, he would make her hold her nose-ring in one hand, and would throw his spear through it with great force. It used to go into the ground on the other side so violently that the earth would shake. Then the Raja would ask his wife, 'Is there anyone greater than I in the whole world?' And she would meekly reply, 'There is no one greater or wiser than my Raja in the whole world.'

Near the Palace there lived a Malin. She used to get very nervous when the Raja threw his spear at his wife, and she thought and thought till she had a plan to stop him. She went to the Rani one day when the Raja was in his court and asked her, 'What does the Raja say to you when he throws his spear through your nose-ring.' The Rani told her proudly, for she was proud of her Raja and his power. Then said the Malin, 'Promise not to repeat to anyone what I will now tell you, and especially not to the Raja or he will kill me.' The Rani promised. The Malin then said, 'When next the Raja asks you if there is anyone greater than him, say to him, To me indeed you are the greatest of all, but there are stars and stars and the earth is greater still.'

That night the Raja came home and threw his spear through his wife's nose-ring. But when he asked her if there was any greater than he in the world, she replied, 'To me indeed you are greatest of all, but there are stars and stars and the earth is greater

still.' When the Raja heard this, he was very angry. 'So there is one greater than I in the world. I will go to find him and will not return till I have killed him.' The Rani was frightened and begged him not to go, but nothing would turn him from his purpose.

The Raja went eight days and nine nights till he passed the borders of his own kingdom. There he found a man spinning rope out of sand for the other Raja's elephants. The Raja was frightened, and said in his mind, 'Perhaps after all this Raja is greater than I.'

He went on and from a distance he saw a great flock of sheep grazing. The shepherd was playing his flute, but when he saw the stranger he whistled and the sheep ran to him, whereupon he turned them one by one into lice. He tied them up in his blanket and went away.

Then the Raja went on and at last came to a field where the Raja of that country was ploughing his fields with his own hands. Instead of bullocks this Raja had tigers in his plough. The plough itself was a cobra. The field was a pile of black rocks. The Raja's wife and daughter were sitting near to watch. When they saw the stranger approach, the girl jumped up in delight and cried, 'O father, here is something to hunt.'

Now the Raja of that country was a Rakshasa. When he heard what his daughter said he ran to get the stranger. But the Raja said, 'Mamaji Ram' and thus saved his life, for how could an uncle kill his nephew or a father his son-in-law? The Rakshasa was very angry and cried, 'Which of my sisters gave you birth?' But they had to take him to the house and treat him well. They planned to eat him while he was asleep. That night they gave the Raja a great feast to make him sleep heavily, and they themselves sat by drinking. The Raja kept them drinking till they were unable to move. Then they fell asleep and the Raja ran for his life.

But the Rakshasa awoke and chased him. For eight days and nine nights he chased him till they came to the Raja's own home. The Raja ran into the Palace and begged his wife to save him. She pretended that she had just given birth to a child. They killed a goat and smeared the blood on the Raja and on the ground. She took him in her lap, put the goat's stomach by her side and the women gathered round. When the Rakshasa came and asked where the Raja was, the Rani wept saying, 'Look, I have just given birth

to a child with a moustache and my Raja has gone to find some Rakshasa to offer him in sacrifice.' When the Rakshasa heard this, he was terrified and went back to his own kingdom.

But the proud Raja was proud no longer, for his wife had become his mother that his life might be saved.

NOTE I

The Lamsena

'Lamsena' is a name applied in central India to a youth whose family cannot afford to pay the bride-price for his wife and therefore send him to work in his future father-in-law's house for a period of three, five or seven years. This is the well-known marriage by service which has been recorded for people in all parts of India. The boy who thus serves as Jacob served in the house of Laban is known also as Ghar-jamai and Lamhada. The arrangement is not generally satisfactory since the youth has no protection against a breach of contract if the girl for whom he serves or her family come to dislike him or find him unsatisfactory. In Mandla, Gond fathers-in-law are often dishonest in this matter and the Lamsena boy is generally despised. In Bastar, however, the more unsophisticated and honest Maria and Muria generally treat their serving sons-in-law more fairly. If they decide to turn them out, they pay compensation equivalent to their term of service, and the strongly equalitarian character of the Muria at least saves the boy from being despised.

Both the difficulties and the romance of this curious relationship which, contrary to all the usual tribal taboos, brings a man and his betrothed into close contact in the same house for a period of years before they are married, are illustrated in several of the stories collected in this book.

NOTE 2

The Aboriginal Attitude to Sadhus

Throughout the oral literature of India, the Sadhu plays a double part. He is at once a convenient means of providing the hero with magical power and an equally convenient means of frustrating the hero's happiness at the last moment, thus prolonging the tale a little longer. On the whole the Sadhu, Fakir or Yogi appears in the worst possible light. Bloomfield has given a detailed and entertaining account of false ascetics and nuns in Hindu fiction. 'To a considerable extent', he says, 'the place occupied in western oriental and European fiction by evil magicians and wizards is held in India

by mendicant ascetics'.¹ This is a natural result of the catastrophic and sadistic element in Shivaite religion. From cruelty and horror comes *vidya*, which is magical knowledge of a special type. Bloomfield classifies no fewer than six types of false ascetics:

1. Those who practice atrocities, *ex professo*,
2. Wicked ascetics smitten by love,
3. Greedy, gluttonous or otherwise vicious ascetics,
4. Rogues who sham asceticism,
5. Animals which sham asceticism,
6. Wicked female ascetics.²

In the stories of this collection, we find the Sadhu or Fakir fulfilling, as usual, his double role of magic provider and lustful criminal. In Chap. VI, 2, the ascetic's hair has grown twenty-four miles long. The hero gathers it together and wastes twelve years washing it. When the Sadhu is clean at last, full of anger he opens his eyes and all the forest is burnt. Once he has cooled down, however, he becomes very useful, turning the hero into a parrot, a bee and a fly, giving him weapons and getting him his bride, whom for once he does not try to seduce. In VI, 4, there is a Sadhu who lives on the juice of dub grass, in other words on nothing. He finds two children, feeds them on magic milk, gives them magic sticks and a charm, but then vanishes from the scene. In XVII, 5, we again get a good Sadhu who helps the hero by giving him magic ashes and excellent advice. But in XIV, 1, the Sadhu is a cruel murderer, in XV, 8, he abducts the younger wife of a Raja, turning her into a fly, but himself is starved to death. In XIV, 6, a fakir seduces a Rani and persuades her to attempt the murder of her husband. In I, 1, Rusi the ascetic, conceited and lustful, starts the machinery of the tale working and then fortunately disappears. In I, 5, also a murderous and lecherous Sadhu who already has a daughter carries off the hero's girl and talks throughout like a cannibal Rakshasa. Indeed in many places it is hard to distinguish Sadhu from demon.

One characteristic of these Sadhus is their habit of living in ant-hills. Ant-hills, of course, throughout India are regarded as sacred because Siva once manifested himself in that form. The author of the *Ramayana*, Valmiki, takes his name from the fact that he was born or did penance in an ant-hill.³ At Sunargaon is the tomb of Ponkai Diwana, known as the 'White Ant Madman', because he sat twelve years in the forest and allowed the white ants (*ponka*) to build a mound about him up to his neck.⁴ Ant-hills are regarded as

¹ M. Bloomfield, 'False Ascetics and Nuns in Hindu Fiction', *J.A.O.S.*, xlv (1924), 202.

² *Ibid.*, 205 f.

³ Russell and Hiralal, iv, 225.

⁴ Cunningham, *Archeological Reports*, xv, 142.

the peculiar homes of snakes; there is a Tamil proverb that the termite is the carpenter of the snake. One of the places where no Brahmin should ever urinate is an ant-hill.¹

The aboriginals share the Hindu reverence for the ant-hill. At weddings in many castes and tribes some of its earth is brought for the sacred platform below the wedding-booth.² The Kharia have a ceremony of worship in an ant-hill and sacrifice to the Sun God before it as if before an altar.³ It is a common motif in the folk-tales for the hero to find treasure buried at the bottom of an ant-hill and guarded by the snakes resident there.

¹ S. T. Moses, 'Ants and Folk-Beliefs in South India', *Man in India*, viii,

14 f.

² See, for example, *The Baiga*, 274 f.; A. K. Iyer, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes*, iii, 362 (for the Idiga), etc.

³ Roy, *The Kharias*, ii, 374 f.

ROMANTIC TALES

THE stories in this chapter are mostly concerned with romantic and magical ways of getting married. Story 1 is a slight and pretty tale with strong resemblances to an incident in the *Katha Sarit Sagara* on the familiar theme of two lovely maidens in a tree who come out to bathe at midnight before the hero's enraptured eyes.¹ Story 2 is also about tree-maidens. This tale and Story 3 both contain that strange element of cruelty which I have noticed in other stories. In the first, the heroes are quite unnecessarily killed by poison and there is no magic to bring them back to life. The second is a rather revolting account of a murderous Brahmin prince. In this tale there is the unique incident of the husband who marries a Baiga girl going to inspect her Life-Index to see if it is in order. There are three points of interest in Story 5.

1. The unusual motif of the hero who uses his magic to stop the girls he is pursuing from buying anything at a bazaar. This was good psychology on his part, for her expenditure of a few pice in a bazaar is one of the most cherished things in the life of an aboriginal girl.

2. The hero, instead of possessing magic obstacles which will hinder pursuit, adopts the more naturalistic method of confusing his tracks almost like the villain of a modern detective story.

3. This tale is one of the few in our collection which has a Chastity Test. This, it must be remembered, is different from the Chastity Index. The Chastity Index is some object left by husband or wife with the married partner, the state of which will indicate the absent one's fidelity. The Chastity Test seems to take two forms. The most familiar in Indian literature is illustrated by the incident in the *Katha Sarit Sagara*, where in order to raise up a fallen elephant a chaste woman declares, 'If I have not ever thought in my mind of any other man than my husband, may it rise up.'² But the incident in our story is a little different from this. Here a jealous youth suspects his girls of betraying

¹ Penzer, vi, 168 ff.

² Penzer, i, 165.

him and institutes a test to find out whether they have or not. There is no question that their chastity could operate to advance the plot of the story as if it were an Act of Truth. In *Legends of the Panjab*, a hero and heroine have to prove their chastity by spinning a single thread of yarn and drawing up with it water from a well in an unbaked pitcher.¹ Both the Chastity Test and Chastity Index, however, are rather uncommon in Indian folk-literature.

Stories 7 and 8 are about the girls Kalendrin and Juarin. This illustrates the powerful attraction which the girl from the outside world has for the aboriginal mind. Kalendrin, whose name implies association with the distillation of liquor, and Juarin the gambler are obviously non-aboriginals. Gambling is not an aboriginal vice, though common among the Hindus.² Yet both stories are genuinely primitive, as is shown by the curious charm in the last paragraph of Story 7, and in Story 8 by the themes of the prince who wants to marry his sister and the angry conflict between father and son, both of whom love the same girl. Story 9 shows how, difficult as it always is to live the life of a Lamsena boy, it is ten times worse to serve for one's wife in a ogre's household. The last story in the Chapter is a skeleton tale about a Dano which I have included here because of its slight but definite love interest.

I

TWO SISTERS IN A TREE

A Kuruk story from Sataspur, Bastar State

A prince and a Diwan's son were great friends. They used to go hunting every day, and on the way they took the honour of every man's daughter-in-law, or daughter or sister that they met. Then all the villagers went to report the matter to the Raja. He called his son and the Diwan called his son and lectured them, but the boys took no notice. At last the Raja decided that since the boys took no care to please him and were ruining the happiness of his

¹ Temple, 39.

² See Penzer, ii, 232. A Kashmir tale describes how a woman who kept a gambling house used her cat to save her in emergency. A girl, whose husband had lost everything, went to play disguised as a man with a mouse hidden in her cloth. This diverted the cat's attention and she was able to save her husband. Knowles, 149.

subjects, he must banish them. He had this written on a paper and stuck on the wall of the Palace.

When the boys came home that evening, they saw the paper and knew that they were banished. They went quickly home and got all the money and ornaments they could, saddled their horses and rode away.

Away they went into the Eth-ban Seth-ban forest, towards Kajliban, where no caw of crow was heard, and no chirp of bird, and there was no smell of man. But in the midst of that lonely forest there was a lake, with a great banyan tree on its bank. The two friends tied up their horses and lay down to rest beneath the tree. They bathed, worshipped the gods, ate their supper and went to sleep.

But the Diwan's son soon woke and as he sat looking over the lake, what was the sound he heard? He heard the *runjun runjun* of a fiddle. Where could this come from, in the middle of the great forest? He got up and went round the tree, searching for whoever made the music.

Now inside the tree two sisters lived and it was they who made such beautiful music. But the Diwan's son could not see them. The Raja's son now woke with the noise and he too searched, but could find nothing.

When the younger sister saw the prince, she said to herself, 'O if only I could marry him!' She took a garland of flowers and threw it over the prince, but he did not see it.

Then night came; again the friends ate and lay down to sleep. But the Diwan's son could not sleep for desire of hearing the music. At midnight, the two girls came out of the tree and ran down to the lake to bathe. The Diwan's son watched them in the moonlight and, as they were coming back to their tree, caught them both in his arms.

Now the prince woke, and the elder sister said, 'Here are two of us and two of you; let us marry.' So the elder sister married the Diwan's son, and the younger sister married the prince. The banyan tree turned into a Palace, and all around a great city came into being, and they lived there happily.

2

THE TWO FRIENDS

A Kuruk story from Chitrakot, Bastar State

A Raja had one son; his Diwan also had a son; and the two boys became great friends. They used to go hunting together; one day they came to a lake on the banks of which were a banyan and a pipal tree. The Diwan's son said, 'Friend, will you hunt in the pipal tree or in the banyan?' The Raja's son said, 'I will hide in the pipal tree.' So he climbed the pipal tree, and the Diwan's son climbed the banyan.

In the pipal tree was an image of Mahadeo; three girls had been worshipping it, and they now came out. One of the girls saw the Raja's son and recognized him. She coughed and raised a brass pot which she was holding and showed it to the boy. Then she showed him a flower, and then her hand.

The Raja's son wondered what these signs meant; he came down from the tree and searched everywhere for the girls, but they had gone away. When the Diwan's son came he asked, 'Well, friend, how many animals have you killed?' The Raja's son told his friend all about the girls, and the latter said, 'Those girls had come to worship Mahadeo, but they shut the door of the tree; that's why you didn't see anything. And the meaning of the signs is this. The cough the girl gave means "I live in Kanchanpur City." Her showing the pot means "I am the daughter of Raja Kansa." Her showing the flower means "My name is Phuldaie." Her showing her hand means "I am not married yet."'

When he heard this, the Raja's son cried, 'Friend, that is the girl I'm going to marry. If she won't marry me, I will drown myself in this lake.' Then said his friend, 'Don't worry; I will arrange this marriage for you.' The Raja's son was very pleased and began to laugh and sing. So full of happiness they went home.

The next day, they took a lot of money and their food and set out for Kanchanpur. In a day or two they reached the city. There was a great garden belonging to the Raja, and in the garden was the house of the Phulmalin. The two boys went to her house and called, 'O old mother, come out.' Presently she came out of the

house, saying, 'And how may you be my sons?' The Diwan's son said, 'No, my mother told me that the Phulmalin of Kanchanpur was her elder sister and that every day she made a garland of flowers for the Raja's daughter.' At this the Phulmalin kissed the two boys and gave them water for their feet. The boys gave all their money to the old woman to keep for them. She thought what fine boys they were and was very pleased.

The next day, the Phulmalin had fever and could not go to the Palace with her garland for the Raja's daughter. The Diwan's son said, 'Mother, I'll make the garland for you' and he made a beautiful garland and put it in a leaf-cup, covering it with a lid of leaves. When the Phulmalin got up, she also made a garland, and took both garlands to the princess.

When the Raja's daughter saw the garlands, she said, 'You made this one, but who sent me that? Tell me the truth, or I'll have you killed.' The Phulmalin was frightened and said, 'My sister's daughter has come and she made it.' The princess said, 'Then bring the girl to see me.'

The next day, the Phulmalin dressed the Raja's son in a sari and many ornaments, and covered his face with cloth, and took him with her to the Palace. When they came near, the boy stood outside and the old woman went in with her garland. The Raja's daughter said, 'Where is your daughter?' 'She is shy of coming into your presence.' So the Raja's daughter went out and brought the boy inside.

Then said the Raja's daughter, 'Leave your daughter here with me for a few days. You may go home.' For the Raja's daughter had recognized the boy. They talked together for a long time and then the Raja's son said, 'My friend is with me; who knows if he is eating his food or no; I ought to go and see him.' Then thought that Raja's daughter, 'This son of a Diwan is too clever for me. He will take this boy away and I will never have him for my own.' So thinking, she made some sweets and put poison in them. 'Give these to your friend', she said. 'But don't you eat them. They are all for him.'

The Raja's son went back to the Phulmalin's house and met his friend. He told him what wonderful fortune he had and gave the boy the sweets. But the Diwan's son would not eat alone. 'Come,

let us share', he said. So the friends ate the sweets with great pleasure and by evening both were dead.

3

THE FOUR SISTERS

A Baiga story from Niwas Tahsil, Mandla District

A Brahmin Raja had one son. After his marriage the boy brought his wife home. He used to go daily to hunt. When he came home she used to put a pot of water on the threshold so that he could wash his feet, but she was too shy to come before him. So many days passed.

Then one day the Raja's son killed his wife in a tank. When the Raja heard it, he called the boy to him and said, 'How many do you want?'

'I'll marry as many girls as you will give me', said the boy.

'Very well', said the father, 'Have as many as you want.'

So the boy saddled his horse, and took food and a lot of money and rode off into the jungle to find wives. Presently he came to a Baiga village. There was a lake there. He lay down to rest on its banks.

In the evening a Baiga girl went to get water. When the prince saw her, he immediately fell in love with her. He followed her back to her house, and asked her father if he might stay there. After a few days the prince said to the old Baiga, 'Give me your daughter, and you can have anything you want.'

The Baiga answered, 'I am only a man of the jungle, and you are a Raja's son. How can you marry my daughter?'

'If you don't give her to me', said the boy, 'I'll die here.'

So they were married, and the prince took his girl home. The girl's life was kept in the hollow trunk of an akabar tree on an island beyond the seven seas and the sixteen rivers. The prince went there and saw his wife's life, that all was well with it, and returned.

One day the Baiga girl said, 'I want to go to my mother's house to see my brothers and sisters.' So they went to her house. Now that girl had three sisters more beautiful than herself. The prince stayed there and all three fell in love with him.

At night they said, 'You are to sleep in this room; don't go outside, don't open the door, don't come into our room.' Then after they had retired, the four sisters sat on a bed and it flew into the air and took them to Bhagavan, and they danced before him.

At night, the boy's desire grew for the three sisters, and he got up to go to them, but could not find them anywhere. In one room there was a horse, whose name was Bendul. He fed the horse and sat on its back and it carried him up to Bhagavan's house, and there he secretly watched the dance.

In the morning the three sisters asked their elder sister to let them also live with the prince. But she was angry and refused. 'He is your *bato*', she said. So the three sisters took her out into the bewar and killed her there, and the prince took the three of them home instead, and they lived with great happiness in the Raja's house.

4

THE BLIND KING

A Baiga tale from Bohi, Pandaria Zamindari

There lived in Andapur a blind king and a blind queen. What did they do? They ate raw meat and cleaned their teeth with dried raw meat. They had no child. They had a Baiga servant. One day they sent him to the jungle to get them meat. The servant went, but by accident he came to the Deovasa, where the gods were holding their durbar that very night. There was a semur tree there and it broke open and let that Baiga hide in its belly.

When night came, all the gods came there, and decided that they would give the blind king and the blind queen a child. In the morning, the servant went back, and when the king found that he had brought no meat he was very angry.

But the servant told him all that he had heard, so the king said, 'If this is true I will give you half my kingdom, but if it is false I'll pull out your inside and stuff you with straw.'

After twelve years a boy was born and the king gave the Baiga half his kingdom. At the same time a child was born in the Baiga's house.

When they grew older the prince and the Baiga boy became great friends. Wherever they went, they went together. The prince made a bow and arrow, and the Baiga had a catapult, and they used to shoot birds with these. When women came to fetch water from the lake in front of the palace, they used to shoot at the earthen pots and break them.

Then the villagers went to the king and told him what the boys were doing. They brought him a present of dried meat so he was pleased and gave them money to buy brass pots instead. But the boys made iron bolts and broke the brass pots also. Then the villagers decided that the only thing to do was to separate the two friends.

They called a barber and sent him to tell the prince that the Baiga had been going to his girl. When he heard that the prince was so angry that he said, 'Until I have buried that Baiga I will eat nothing.'

Then the king quickly made a pit, and put a bed and good food and a lantern in it. They put the Baiga boy in the pit and covered its mouth with wood and piled earth upon it, and went to tell the prince that his friend was buried. There was a little hole in the mouth of the pit for air and for letting down food.

The prince was very happy then and he went to play by the river. Now the king of Aonrapurpatna had gone for his marriage and, returning with his bride, passed through that village. When the queen saw the young prince bathing, she said, 'Let us rest here on the banks of the lake.' Her husband went to sleep under a pipal tree. The queen wandered down to the side of the lake and found the stone on which the boy had sat. On the stone she wrote, 'Come to my city and take me away.' Then her husband awoke and they went on their journey.

In the village there was an old Malin. She saw the queen writing something, and went and told the prince. He went to the elephants' stable and lay down in their dung. When his father came to find him, the boy said he would not eat or drink until someone explained the message to him.

The king sent for a Dewar. He could not read. No one in that village could read. But at last the Dewar saw by his magic that only the Baiga boy could explain the message.

Then the prince said to the Dewar, 'Bring my friend back to

life or I'll cut off my own head.' So the Dewar sent to the king and they brought the Baiga out of his pit, and sent him to the prince. Then they were both very happy, and when they had eaten together they went down to the river, and the Baiga said that the message was from Rupaitin, and that the prince was to come as a beggar and carry her away.

As soon as they could get ready they set out. When they came to the city they found a garden and a lake, and the prince dressed as a Sadhu went at once to the Palace to beg. The king offered him gold and silver, but he refused everything, and then the queen knew that it was her lover who had come. But there was no way by which she could escape.

The Baiga took the dirt from the prince's arm and made a snake out of it. He breathed life into it and sent it to the Palace to bite the girl. The snake got into the Palace and bit the girl and she died.

The king sent for all the doctors and magicians, but nobody could do anything. At last he carried her out to bury her. But the Baiga dressed as a Dewar and stood in the way. He cried that if they would build a fence round the body, and leave him alone with it he would restore it to life.

So the king quickly had a wall made all round, and sent everyone away. The Baiga said mantra over the girl's body and she came back to life. He called the prince and put the girl on his horse. Then they all three rode away as quickly as they could and escaped before the king knew what had happened.

The prince brought the girl home, and the blind king and the blind queen had a great wedding for them. The Baiga married a girl from his own village, and daily they went to the jungle to cut their bewar and to dig for roots.

5

THE FASTIDIOUS BOY

A Muria story from Jhakri, Bastar State

There were two brothers; the younger was unmarried. One day his brother took him to visit a family in another village in order to arrange his marriage. But when the boy saw the girl

who was proposed, he refused to marry her. He picked up a seed of the sarai tree and said, 'When I find a girl as pretty as this I will marry her.' They laughed at him but he went out and searched everywhere but without success. At last he made a lot of combs and carved them carefully and decorated them with cowries and coloured beads. With these he went from bazaar to bazaar selling them and hoping that one day a girl who was beautiful as a sarai seed would come to buy from him. At last as he sat in the bazaar, he saw two lovely sisters coming to buy. He immediately made a spell which stopped them from buying from any other shop but his. They came to him and looking at the combs asked how much they were. He said, 'There is no price for them.' They left the combs and wandered again through the bazaar, but they found they were unable to visit any other shop because of the boy's magic. So they had to return to the boy's shop and they again asked the price of his combs. But he said, 'They have no price, they are for the girl who lives with me.' When the girls heard that, they were very pleased and said, 'Give us the combs, for we are ready to live with you.'

The boy, therefore, removed the magic and the three went together to buy everything they wanted. In the evening they went home with the boy and cooked his food and slept by the roadside. While they were sleeping, another man came along and cast a spell on the boy to make him sleep and so carried off the two girls. As they went he made many footprints on the road, sometimes imitating a tiger, sometimes a bear, sometimes a monkey. He took the girls to his house which was made of iron and shut them up inside.

Then came a fox and kicked the sleeping boy awake. When he found the girls had disappeared he wept. The fox told him what had happened and the boy tried to follow but was puzzled by the different footprints until the fox revealed the trick to him. When the boy reached the iron house he began to fight the owner and was defeated. He went to Bara Pen who gave him a wooden stick which turned into an iron sword and with it the boy killed his enemy. As the enemy died the door of the iron house opened of its own accord and the boy took the girls away.

As they went along the boy began to be troubled whether the

girls had been to the man or not. He asked them many questions but they swore that they were innocent. Then he stretched a thread across the road and made the girls jump over it. They were able to do so and the boy then believed that they were chaste.

When they reached home the boy hid his two wives behind the door. He went to his elder brother's wife and asked her to come and look at them. When she saw them she fell down senseless because of their beauty. That night both the girls came to him and he was frightened and could not eat. But his elder brother's wife taught him how he could live happily with two wives at once and soon both bore him children and they all lived happily together.

6

THE DOLL BRIDE

A Muria story from Phunder, Bastar State

A poor widow had a son and had to work hard all day to feed him. One year after the festival was over the villagers went out to cut the forest and the boy asked his mother to give him an axe so that he could go with them and earn a little money. 'Son, we have no money for our food, how can I buy you an axe?' But he persisted and gave her no rest till at last she went to a carpenter and asked him to make a wooden axe and coat the blade with charcoal. She brought the axe and gave it her son. He took some food in a leaf-basket and a gourd of water and fire in a rope of paddy-straw and went away to the jungle to cut dippa. When he reached a lonely jungle he put all his things on the ground and got a little incense-gum from a sarai tree and called on Kadrenal, Tallur Muttai and the Dead to help him. 'For every tree I cut, may hundreds fall to the ground!' So saying he closed his hands and saluted the four corners of the world.

The boy took his wooden axe and struck a tree. Hundreds fell to the ground. He struck another and hundreds more came down, and an enormous clearing was ready in an hour.

When the rains drew near and it was time to set fire to the clearing he went to the ghotul and took fire from there and again called on the gods and the dead to help him. Directly he lit one

tree, they all caught fire and were burnt. Then came the time for sowing and the boy asked his mother for some seed. 'Son, we have no money even for food, how can I give you seed?' She went round the village begging but no one would give her. At last she found some rice-husks which had been thrown away and gave it to her son. Then when the Gaita told the villagers that it was time to sow, the boy went to his clearing and called on the wild pigs to come and plough it with their tusks. The pigs started digging the ashes into the ground and when he saw them well at work the boy went home and asked his mother for a bride to help him. 'Son, we have no money even for food, how can I pay for a wife?' But when he bothered her constantly at last she went to the carpenter and asked him to make her a wooden girl with bangles on her arms and beads round her head and cowries in her hair. The old woman took the doll home and put it by the hearth, covering its body with haldi. When the boy came home his mother said, 'Son, here's your bride.' 'Then let her give me my food', said the boy, but the doll did nothing. 'Come and sleep with me', said the boy, but the doll remained where it was. 'What sort of a wife is this?' said the boy and he put it on his shoulders and went to the dippa clearing, taking a leaf-basket of food with him. Here again he asked his wife to give him food, but she took no notice. At last he was so angry that he lifted up the doll and threw it on the ground. The noise frightened the wild pigs and they ran away into the jungle. The boy heard the noise of the pigs running away and thinking it was his wife who was escaping went in pursuit of her. As he went through the jungle he met a girl who had only been married the previous day and still was wearing her haldi-coloured clothes. 'Here's my bride', he thought to himself, and he seized her and began to beat her for running away. There was another girl with her and she ran to the village and told the people what was happening. The girl's husband ran to the place and tried to save his wife. Each boy then claimed the girl as his bride. After a long quarrel the widow's son said, 'If you are her real husband, let this girl lift you up by your moustache and swing you round; if tears come from your eyes then you are not her husband but I am.' The test was agreed on but when the girl lifted up her husband by his moustache, tears started from his

eyes and rolled down his cheeks. He had to hand over his wife to the widow's son who took her home with great delight. That year their clearing gave a great crop and from that time the boy became a rich man.

7

THE STORY OF KALENDRIN

A Muria story from Kongera, Bastar State

A Raja and Rani had one son. Six months after his birth both parents died. The Diwan took charge of the kingdom, and adopted the young prince as his own child. The Diwan's wife took milk-medicine and fed the boy at her own breast. So eight or nine years passed. Then said the Diwanin to her husband, 'Now we should make arrangements for the boy's marriage.' The Diwan took two measures of rupees and went out to find a wife for the prince. But all the money was finished before he had found a suitable girl. So the Diwan returned home empty-handed.

After a little while, the Diwan took four measures of rupees, and this time the prince said, 'I am coming with you.' Again they had a long fruitless search. On the way home they came in the evening to a village, and slept in the ghotul. There were two rooms in that ghotul; the Diwan slept in one, and the prince in the other, and in another house were the chelik and motiari.

At night the prince had a dream, that in Kalendra there was a Kalendrin girl who was his yoke-fellow. He must marry her, or he would get no mate anywhere. The boy got up and sat on his bed; he could sleep no more after that dream. In the morning, the Diwan said, 'Why didn't you sleep tonight?' The boy said, 'I dreamt of Kalendrin; you go back to the kingdom and see to its affairs, and I will go in search of this girl.' The prince took some money for the road, and after two months reached Kalendra. There in every village was a still where they made the four times distilled kalend liquor; in some shops they sold it at five rupees the bottle, in some at six, but only where Kalendrin lived could you get the twenty rupees a bottle liquor. The prince sought everywhere for the best liquor, but all the publicans directed him to go to where Kalendrin lived. At last he came to this famous still,

and Kalendrin's father said, 'Yes, we have liquor at twenty rupees the bottle.' While they were talking, Kalendrin peeped through the door. 'My yoke-fellow has come', she said to herself. She said to her mother, 'However drunk he gets, don't trouble him. I will let him sleep in my bed.'

The prince drank the precious liquor and became very drunk; he fell senseless to the ground. The girl ran to him and took him in her arms and carried him to her bed and laid him there to sleep. She said to her father, 'This is the boy I am going to marry.' Her father said, 'If your heart is thus, you may certainly marry him.' He got six measures of rice, and called his relatives from the neighbouring villages.

So Kalendrin and the prince were married. After two years, Kalendrin's father said, 'Now go to your kingdom.' But the prince thought, 'I will give my own kingdom to the Diwan. There is a land where every Raja dies. If he rules for a day, he dies that night; if he rules for a night, he dies that day. We will go there.'

They took horses and money, and set out. As they went, the prince halted, and went to relieve himself. Here was a place where the road forked into two; the girl went along one road, and the boy when he returned to his horse went along the other. So both went alone and were very frightened. Kalendrin had her husband's clothes with her, and she put these on for fear of what they might do to her if they thought her a maid.

After a time, Kalendrin came to a town where there were six young princes—not one of them was married. When they saw her, they knew that she was really a girl, and a princess. They seized her, saying that they would marry her. Now Kalendrin had a bottle of kalend liquor with her. She said, 'Here is a bottle of liquor. Drink it, all of you. If you escape being drunk, I will marry you; but if you get drunk, then I will refuse.'

The eldest brother said, 'I'll drink it; give me some.' He sat down with Kalendrin and she made him drink. She let the liquor fall through her fingers to the ground. But the boy fell senseless and drunken. So with them all.

Kalendrin got on her horse and fled away. She came to an ant-hill where Rusi the ghost was living. He said in his mind, 'I must marry this girl.' He caught her horse, and made her alight. But

what did Kalendrin do? She brought out a chilum-pipe a hand long and a seer of ganja, saying, 'Smoke this pipe, and if you do not become drunk I will marry you.' Rusi took the pipe and smoked it, but he was soon drunk with the smoke. And Kalendrin got on her horse and fled away.

At last she came to the land where the Raja died after ruling for a day or a night. She told the servants that if any came asking for a girl with a bottle of kalend liquor, or any came asking for a girl with a pipe of ganja, they should handcuff him and bring him to her in chains. But if any came asking for Kalendrin, he should be brought to her with honour.

Now the brothers who had been defeated came searching for Kalendrin, and Rusi too came searching for her. But when they came asking for her, the servants caught them and brought them to Kalendrin in chains. At last her prince came, crying, 'Alas! alas! where is my love, Kalendrin?' and they brought him with great honour into the Palace. When these two lovers met, they wept together. At last the prince said, 'In this kingdom no Raja can live more than a day; what shall we do?' Kalendrin said, 'I will prepare magic to destroy this danger.'

Secretly she took her menstrual cloth, and tied it up with her pubic hairs outside the house; it was a Sunday, the day fixed for the charm; from that day no evil came to the palace, and the prince lived there with Kalendrin as Raja and Rani of that kingdom, and nothing troubled them.

8

THE DICE-PLAYER

A Baiga story from Niwas Tahsil, Mandla District

A Raja had a son and a daughter. Every day he used to go out hunting, but he never killed anything. At last, one day, he got a sambhar and a tiger. He was very pleased and brought them home, and held a great Karma dance to celebrate it. But his son was angry and hid in a little hut. The Raja sent his servants to find him, but the boy gave them gali and beat them out of the house.

The Raja sent for a Malin and promised her her weight in rupees

if she could bring the boy back. She ate a lot of parched gram, and took a large earthen pot of ashes. She sat in the pot and farted loudly. The ashes flew all over the place. The boy burst out laughing. Then the Malin asked him what was the matter. He said, 'I will come home if I can marry my sister.' The Malin said, 'I will speak to your father and arrange it.'

The old woman went to the Raja and said, 'Will you let your son marry your daughter. If you won't he will take poison and die.' The Raja thought, 'Then I will have to let them marry. But I cannot live with them after they have committed so great a sin. I'll give the boy the kingdom and I'll go and live in the forest.'

The Malin returned to the boy and told him what his father had said. The boy answered, 'If my father won't stay with me, then kill my sister and send me one of her eyes and one of her ears, and then I'll eat my food and come home.'

The Raja sent for a Chandal and said, 'Take my daughter and hide her in a village. Cut off the ear and eye of some animal and send it to my son.' So the Chandal took the girl to the village. There was a man thrown out by the villagers. He was neither burnt nor buried, he was lying by the roadside. The Chandal cut out an eye and cut off a ear, and sent them to the boy, who was pleased and took his food.

The next day the Raja went hunting; he got a sambhar and brought it home. As he was coming home, he met a Brahmin whose wife was pregnant. They had one beautiful daughter. The Brahmin's wife became filled with the desire for meat, so the Brahmin went to the Raja and begged for a little. The Raja said he would give the meat if the Brahmin gave his daughter. The wife was so mad for the meat that she could think of nothing else, so they gave their daughter. The girl was very happy. 'I'll be a Rani', she said. She thought she was to be for the young prince, but really the Raja wanted her for himself.

So the Raja married her. The Brahmin was angry, but the Raja's son was angrier still. He threatened to take poison and die. Then the Raja had a dream. His life went out from his body and saw a lovely girl, Juarin, a virgin. She was playing dice. The Raja thought, 'I'll marry my son to this girl.'

The next day the Raja went to fetch the girl. She had a servant who stood outside her door and called people to play dice with her. In front of the door was a great deal of mud. When the Raja went, there his legs got covered with mud. Juarin gave him very little water to wash, only enough for his hands. They sat down to play, and Juarin won. Then she locked him up in a room and put ornaments in his ears and a cowrie in his nose and bangles on his wrists.

When the prince heard what had happened to his father, he went to the place and the servant called him inside. He fell into the mud, and they gave him a little water and some oil. He rubbed his muddy legs with his hands, and when they were dry, covered them with oil. When the girl saw him she was afraid.

Then they began to play at dice. The girl took everything from him, even his clothes, till he was naked. But the boy knew some charms. The girl's food was on a beam of the roof. By his magic he knocked it down. He said, 'Go, a cat is eating your food.' When she went to save her food, the boy changed places with her, and after that he won back everything he had lost. So the girl said, 'Now you have beaten me. Eat food from my hands and marry me.' The boy said he would marry her when she released his father. She did so and they were married, and the boy took Juarin home. On the way a snake bit the Raja and he died. The little Brahmin girl said, 'I've never been to the Raja. It was for you I came.' So the boy kept her as his second wife.

Then the Sadhu came to the court. 'Your fate is very good', he told the prince. 'You have two wives.' When he saw the Brahmin girl, she was so beautiful that he fainted. When he recovered, he began to plan how to get her. He said to the prince, 'My son, there is an ant-hill in the jungle in which is a great treasure. Go and get it, my son.' The boy went and dug with his hands, but there was a snake in the ant-hill. It bit him and he died. So the Sadhu went to the Brahmin girl and said, 'Your husband is in great trouble, go and help him.' As she was going out of the house, the Sadhu turned her into a fly and shut her up in a hollow bamboo.

The Sadhu lived in a stone house by the sea-shore. He took her there, shut all the doors and turned her back into a girl. Then

they ate together. The Sadhu asked her to make ready his bed. She did so, but she made another bed for herself. 'I have taken a vow not to go to a man for twelve years', she said. 'If you force me, I will die at once.' So the Sadhu slept quietly by himself. In the morning he turned her into a fly again and shut her up in the bamboo.

Juarin Kaniya had a son. When he was old enough he went to look for his father. He found the body by the ant-hill. As he sat weeping there, a snake and a mongoose began to fight. The snake bit the mongoose and the mongoose bit the snake. The mongoose was dying, but it went to a phang tree, sniffed at it and recovered. It came back and killed the snake.

So the boy went to the phang tree and dug up the root. He ground it small and stuffed some of it into his father's nostrils. Then he took the nose in his mouth and blew with all his might. As the wind went into his father's body, he recovered. 'Who are you?' asked the father. 'I'm your son', said the boy.

Then the boy went to the sea and found the Sadhu's house. He hid himself outside. At night the Sadhu opened a window high up in the wall. He turned the fly into a girl again. That was the day on which her twelve years' vow came to an end, but she said, 'Spare me for one day more.' The boy found a rope and threw it through the window. Then he climbed up into the house. The girl woke and gave him some food. The boy said, 'You are my little mother.' The Sadhu was sleeping very heavily. The boy said, 'Come back to the Palace. My father is waiting for you.' They climbed out of the window, and took the Sadhu's stick and his magic water. In these two things was all his magic. They shut the window from outside.

In the morning the Sadhu woke, and found his girl and his magic gone, and the window shut. He could not get out and slowly starved to death.

But at the court of the Raja they were all very happy.

9

SERVING FOR AN OGRE'S DAUGHTER

A Baiga story from Pandpur, Mandla District

A Baiga and his wife had five sons; they had grown strong in the sunshine and tall with the wind. But they were very poor and lived by hunting. One day the five brothers went out hunting and came to the Kajliban Binj Pahar. There they found nothing to eat, and night fell. They tried to find their way home, but lost their way in the forest. They wandered here and there until they came to the house of a Dano.

When that Dano saw the five Baiga brothers, he was very pleased, for he had six daughters and one son. He welcomed them saying, 'My sons-in-law, I was just coming to find you. For I have five daughters ready for you.' He gave them a fine feast that night, and divided his daughters among them. He gave them no work to do that day, but the next day he thought how to make them do the work of Lamsena boys.

So in the morning he said, 'Go to the fields, and plough them.' But they said, 'There are no bullocks.' 'That doesn't matter', said the Dano. 'Go to the field and cry "Bachhi-hi-o-hi-o!" and all the bullocks will come.' The five boys went to the field and cried as the Dano had said, whereupon ten tigers came running to the field. When the brothers saw the tigers they were very frightened.

The five sisters went for water, and as they passed by the field, they said, 'Let's go secretly and see what those boys are doing.' When they saw the five boys sitting in a corner of the field, afraid to move because of the tigers they went to them and said, 'Don't be frightened. Catch the tigers and yoke them to the ploughs. They won't hurt you.' So the boys caught the tigers and yoked them to the ploughs.

When they finished their day's ploughing they let the tigers go and went home to supper. In this way the five Baiga boys went daily to the fields and ploughed with the tigers.

Now the youngest of the Dano's daughters, the sixth, slept alone, for she had only one eye and had the appearance of a Dano, though her sisters were all beautiful. One day she said to her

mother, 'Mother, I must eat the privates of my brothers-in-law.' Her mother said, 'Hush, child. They may hear you. Let them go to sleep, and then you can eat whatever you want.' But when she went to where they were sleeping the youngest boy, whose name was Mongoose Boy, said, 'Mongoose Boy sees you' and she was frightened and ran away.

The next day the girl again said to her mother, 'Mother, I want to eat the privates of my brothers-in-law.' The mother said, 'Wait for a few days, child, then I'll cut them off myself and give them to you to eat.' But the Mongoose Boy heard what they said and told his brothers. 'Tonight', he said, 'put on bangles and dress in the girls' clothes. Then we'll sleep on the ground and the girls can sleep on our beds.' For the Baiga never let their wives sleep on a bed—if they have one—but the man sleeps on the bed and the wife on the floor by his side.

So that night they did as the boy suggested. In the middle of the night, the Dano came with a knife and killed his own daughters, supposing them to be the boys. The boys waited till he had gone and then ran away. Then the youngest girl, her with one eye, said, 'Mother, I want to eat their privates. Mother, I want to eat their privates.' The mother said, 'Wait a little, child. In the morning you can eat as much as you want.'

The boys ran away and climbed a banyan tree. In the morning, when the Dano saw he had killed his own daughters he was very sad. But by his magic he made them alive again, and the mother and the one-eyed girl went off to find the boys. They searched for a long while till at last the one-eyed girl saw the boys hiding in the tree.

But the boys drove nails all over the tree. When the mother and daughter tried to climb up the tree the boys pushed them down and they fell against the nails and were so torn that they died. Then they came down and found the Dano and cut him into small pieces. They went to the house and found the girls alive. So they took them home to their own village and lived happily with them for the rest of their lives.

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THE PARROT

A Gond story from Karanjia, Mandla District

In a certain village lived a very poor boy who lived by begging. One day he went begging his way to a town. That town was deserted, for a Dano had devoured all the inhabitants. Only the Raja's daughter was left and she had been kept as his wife by the Dano.

As the boy wandered round the town he came to the Raja's Palace and looking up saw the girl seated on the roof. She called to him saying, 'Brother, why have you come here. Don't you know that the Dano eats everyone who comes here? When he comes he will certainly eat you too.' The boy said, 'Will you let the Dano eat me or will you hide me somewhere and save me?' The girl called the boy inside, and gave him lots to eat and shut him up in an iron grain-bin.

When the Dano came home he cried, 'I smell man, I smell man !' The girl said, 'If there's any human being here, its me; you had better eat me.' The Dano said, 'No, instead of you I'd rather eat my own hands and feet.' After a time the Dano went out again. The boy came out and said to the girl, 'When he comes in again, ask him where he keeps his life.' The boy bathed and the girl gave him more food and they slept together with great delight, and then when they heard the Dano coming the boy hid again in the grain-bin.

Then the girl made the Dano sit down and spoke sweetly to him and said, 'You often go out far away, and I am always afraid for you. Tell me where you keep your life.' The Dano said, 'It is by the side of the ocean, in a golden cage hanging from the branches of a semur tree.'

When the Dano went out again, the boy came out and the girl told him all that the Dano had said. She made him food for his journey and the boy set out to find the Dano's life. He crossed one forest, he crossed two forests; he reached a valley between the black and the green hills, where the green bamboo rustled in the wind and the dry bamboo creaked loudly and the branches of the bhoir

tree were bent beneath the weight of fruit. As you crossed that plateau it sounded hollow beneath your feet which yet stuck in the earth as if it were wax. There were eight hundred streams and twenty hundred rivulets. The dry wood sounded *tha* and the tigers and bears cried *ao*. When the light failed on the hill they slept in the valley; when it failed in the valley they slept on the hill. At last the boy reached the semur tree.

There he ate the food the girl had given him and then climbed the tree. There in a golden cage he found a parrot. But as he put his hand into the cage he heard the Dano coming. The boy quickly took the parrot and broke its leg. As he did this the Dano fell down with a broken leg. But he got up and came on again. Now the boy broke the parrot's wing, and the Dano's arm broke in two. When the Dano came near the tree, the boy broke the parrot's head and threw it down, whereon the Dano fell dead. The boy came down from the tree and burnt the parrot, and the Dano also was burnt to ashes. The boy taking the golden cage went back to the deserted town and married the girl. Soon they had filled the place with people and all lived happily.

NOTE I

The Language of Signs

In considering this fascinating subject we must resist the temptation to go too far afield. We are concerned with India and in India not with sign language generally but with its use between lovers. Crooke has given an excellent account of sign language in India generally and to this the curious reader is referred.¹ The story in the text bears a remarkable resemblance to an incident in the *Katha Sarit Sagara*.² A prince and his friend enter a great forest which seems like the chosen home of love with singing cuckoos for bards, fanned by trees with their clusters of blossoms waving like chowries. They come to a great lake looking like a second sea, the birth-place of lotuses of various colours and in that pool of gods there comes a maiden who fills the tank with the flood of her beauty.

As the prince gazed she made a sign to tell him her country and other particulars about her. She took a lotus from her garland

¹ Crooke, 'Secret Messages and Symbols used in India', *J.B.O.R.S.*, v, 451-462. For signs used by criminals, specially by the Dehliwal and Malpura Baoia, see Kennedy, *Criminal Classes in the Bombay Presidency*, 179-208.

² Penzer, vi, 168.

of flowers and put it in her ear twisting it into the form of the *dantapatra* ornament or tooth-leaf. Then she took another lotus and placed it on her head and finally laid her hands significantly upon her heart. The prince did not understand the signs but his friend did. When the prince returned home he was consumed with longing and in despair because he did not know where to find his beloved but his wise friend interpreted the signs. 'By placing the lotus in her ear, she meant to say 'I live in the realm of king Karnotpala.' By making it into the tooth-leaf ornament she said, 'Know that I am the daughter of an ivory-carver there.' By lifting up the lotus she let you know that her name was Padmavati, and by placing her hand on her heart she told you that it was yours.' Understanding the signs the prince set out to win his love. It will be noticed that here, as in our story, and indeed generally, the hero never understands the signs. This is a useful trick to enable the narrator to explain their meaning through the mouth of a third party. The story in the *Katha Sarit Sagara* has passed in its entirety through the *Baital Pachisi* to the repertoire of the ayah and in the middle of the nineteenth century was told by a very old nurse to Miss Stokes's mother: though retold some eight hundred years after Somadeva it had undergone few alterations in the process.¹

The use of sign language is less common than we might expect in Indian oral literature, but there is an example in Swynnerton² and in Stein and Grierson's *Hatim's Tales* (p. 21: the story of the goldsmith). The lady turns her back, shows a mirror and throws some water, a posy of flowers and a hair out of the window. Finally she scratches the sill of the window with an iron stiletto. All this means that someone else was in the room, but that her lover could meet her by the water-drain in the garden and must be prepared to file through iron railings. At the moment she was combing her hair.³ In a Kashmir tale, a princess covers her face with lotus petals and holds up an ivory box to reveal to her lover her name and city.⁴ Crooke describes how *pān* and betel are universally eaten by the Khyongtha, and they are not infrequently used as a means wherewith to make amatory propositions. Thus, a leaf of *pān* with betel and sweet spices inside, accompanied by a certain flower, mean 'I love you.' If much spice is put inside the leaf and one corner turned in a peculiar way, it signifies 'Come.' The leaf being touched with turmeric means 'I cannot come.' A small piece of charcoal inside the leaf means 'Go, I have done with you.'⁵ 'Kandian

¹ Stokes, *Indian Folk Tales*, 7. Here the heroine puts a rose to her teeth to show that her father's name is Dant, then behind her ear that her country is Karnatak, then at her feet her own name is Panvpati.

² Swynnerton, 167.

³ Penzer, i, 81.

⁴ Knowles, 215.

⁵ Crooke, *J.B.O.R.S.*, v, 460. See also Lewin, *Wild Races of South-eastern India*, 123.

girls', says Parker, 'make almost imperceptible signals to each other. If without moving the head the eyes be momentarily directed towards the door, the question is asked, "Shall we go out?"' An affirmative reply is given by an expressionless gaze, a negative one by closing the eyes for an instant.¹

Similar signs are also employed in marriage negotiations. The Khond make a marriage proposal by placing a brass cup and three arrows at the door of the girl's father. He will remove these once to show his reluctance, and they will be again replaced. If he removes them a second time, it signifies the definite refusal of the match; but if he allows them to remain, the bridegroom's friends go to him and say, 'We have noticed a beautiful flower in passing through your village and desire to pluck it.'² The Munda send a number of clay marbles to the guardians of the bridegroom to signify the number of rupees making up the bride-price. A number of sal leaves, each rolled up and tied with a coloured thread, signify the number of women's sheets which the bridegroom must present to the relatives of the bride.³

Finally we may note an amusing Santal variant on this theme which although not concerned with the language of love may be quoted as one of the rare examples of sign language in primitive Indian folk-tales.

A Raja thought there was no one in the world so powerful as himself. One day he called his court and bade them guess what he was thinking about. When everyone had failed the Raja called his Diwan and gave him a month to discover someone who could guess his thought, otherwise he would be disgraced. The Diwan was in despair, but his daughter found a dumb shepherd who, she said, would succeed where all had failed.

So the Diwan presented himself before the Raja with the dumb shepherd and found a large company assembled to see what happened. The two stood before the Raja and the dumb man looked at the Raja. Then the Raja held up one finger, at this the dumb shepherd held up two fingers. Then the Raja held up three fingers, but at this the dumb man made signs of dissent and ran away as fast as he could. Then the Raja laughed and seemed very pleased and praised the Diwan for having brought him such a clever man, and gave the Diwan a rich reward.

The Diwan was still at a loss to know what had happened, and begged the Raja to explain what had passed between him and the shepherd. 'When I held up one finger', said the Raja, 'I asked him whether I alone was Raja, and he by holding up two reminded me that there was God, who was as powerful as I am.

¹ Parker, ii, 32.

² Russell and Hiralal, iii, 467. For an admirable account of such symbols, see Archer, 147 ff.

³ Roy, *The Mundas*, 441.

Then I asked him whether there was any third, and he vehemently denied that there was. Thus he has read my thoughts, for I have always been thinking that I alone am powerful but he has reminded me that there is God as well, but no third.'

Then they all went their ways, and that night the Diwan questioned the dumb shepherd as to how he had been able to understand the Raja: and the dumb man explained. 'I have only three sheep of my own, and when I appeared before the Raja he held up one finger, meaning that he wanted me to give him one of my sheep, and as he is a great Raja I offered to give him two; but when he held up three fingers to show that he wanted to take all three from me, I thought that he was going too far and so I ran away.'¹

¹ Bompas, 193 f.

SUPERNORMAL BIRTHS

IN this chapter I have assembled a few stories which largely turn on some form of supernatural conception. Throughout central India the people, even the most primitive of them, are fully aware of the facts of physiological paternity. They know full well that the conjugation of a man and woman is necessary to produce a child. Yet not only in folk-tale but also in fact many of the aboriginals believe just as firmly that pregnancy may sometimes be due to super-normal causes. I have known women come to a dispensary and declare quite sincerely that they have contracted gonorrhoea through intercourse with a Raksa. I have known other cases of women who firmly believed themselves to have been impregnated by drinking urine or water in which a few drops of semen had fallen. In addition to the stories in the text, I have recorded many declarations, all of them obviously believed true, of this kind of supernormal impregnation: in Harra Tola (Rewa State) a Brahmin girl had a boy; in Bhawaruja (Rewa State) a Lamanin girl had a girl; in Mohgaon (Mandla District) a Pankin widow, six years after her husband's death and though she had never since been to a man, gave birth to a son.

Of this last incident, my Gond informant said, 'Perhaps it came through a dream; perhaps she drank water into which semen had fallen; perhaps she deceived us all and had a lover secretly.'

There is a story of a Panka of Saraipani (Pandaria Zamin-dari) who desired his elder brother's widow, to whom indeed he had a right. She rejected him. 'So he brought out his seed, put it in milk, and secretly gave her to drink.' She had never had a child, but now she became pregnant, and gave birth to a son, who was at once claimed by her brother-in-law.

There is a Badi story from Rewa State of how a woman was serving a truly chaste Muni, 'so pure that his seed escaped in sleep.' She was washing his cloth: it would not come clean: so she scraped it with her teeth, and became pregnant. Another tale from Potapara in the Raipur District tells how two unmarried girls travelling in the jungle grew very thirsty. They found two gourds left under a tree by two boys. One was full of water, the other of urine. One girl drank the urine; the

other met the boy and lived with him. After a time each girl gave birth to a son. When the boy who had urinated into the gourd heard the story, he accepted the child as his, though he had had no physical connexion with the mother.

Mr R. B. Agarwala tells me of a Panka woman living near Dindori who used to collect the earth on which her lover had urinated. She would dry it in the sun and then rub it all over her body, believing that it would make conception easier.

In Indian folk literature generally the most common means of artificial impregnation is by eating some kind of fruit. An example of this may be found in the *Katha Sarit Sagara* where Queen Vasavadatta is given a fruit in her dream by a certain man with matted locks. 'Then the king Vatsa rejoices with the queen supposing that the god of the moon-crest had given her a son under the form of a fruit', and indeed in a short time the queen became pregnant with a 'glorious child.'¹ So also in the story of king Parityagasena two wives receive heavenly fruits from Durga² and in another chapter of the *Katha Sarit Sagara* the mother of the future king Vikramaditya is given a fruit by Siva.³

In later folk-tales the fruit, which is often given by a Sadhu, is generally a mango.⁴ In Stokes, p. 91, *lichi* fruits are given. In Day, p. 1, a mendicant gives a barren queen the juice of a pomegranate flower and at p. 187 the queen takes a drug the nature of which is not specified. In all these cases, of course, the fruit or drug is rather a medicine to cure barrenness than a means of actual supernatural impregnation, for the husband and wife are in most cases cohabiting at the time.

In the central India stories, however, conception is more definitely supernatural. In a Baiga tale given at p. 493 of my book a party of girls go into the forest and becoming very thirsty find at the foot of a cotton tree two leaf-cups in one of which is a man's urine and in the other a jackal's. Two of the girls drink them, become pregnant, and one gives birth to six boys and the other to a jackal. In the stories collected in this Chapter, in Story 1, a Sadhu puts his semen in a lotus and sends it floating down a river to where a virgin is bathing. She picks up the lotus to smell it and the seed goes through her nose into the belly. In Story 2, a girl who is expressly stated to be a

¹ Penzer, ii, 136.

² Ibid., iii, 263.

³ Cf. Crooke, i, 227-8.

⁴ As in Dracott, 6; Stokes, 41; Frere, 254; Day 117; Sastri, *Folk-Lore in Southern India*, 140; Roy, *The Births*, 468; J.B.O.R.S., ii, 293 and xv, 242; Kuowles, 131, 146.

virgin, drinks a little water in a leaf on which the rays of the sun have fallen and becomes pregnant. In Story 3, a deer licks up human spittle and gives birth to a human child. In Story 4 three women, all of whom have just concluded the catamenial period, go into the forest and, being thirsty, drink the urine of a mongoose and human urine in mistake for water and in due time two boys and a mongoose are born. In Story 5, impregnation is caused simply by desire.

Hartland has studied this subject so fully in the literature of the world that there is no need to discuss it further but the following paragraph provides some interesting parallels to the incidents in the text.

In various parts of the world stories have been told of women who have been fertilized by semen imbibed through the mouth or even through the nose. An Irish manuscript of the beginning of the fifteenth century tells us that Cred the daughter of Ronan, King of Leinster, gathered cress on which the *sperma genitale* of a certain robber Findach by name had just fallen and ate it, 'and thereof was born the ever-living Boethin.' We need not dwell on this unsavoury subject. Let it suffice to say that stories containing this incident are found among the Salish of North America, among the ancient Peruvians, and repeatedly in India. The Gipsies of Southern Hungary tell a tale of a woman who was transformed into a fish as a punishment for repulsing Saint Nicholas when he appeared to her as a beggar. She was condemned to remain in that form until impregnated by her husband. This was effected by devouring a leaf on which some of his spittle had fallen.¹

Later in his account Hartland points out that it is quite common for the rays of the sun to fertilize women. Perhaps this was the original form of the story of Danae. The incident appears in several modern European *marchen* which are variants of that story. In China, impregnation by the sun seems to have been a common fate of the mothers of distinguished emperors. A Japanese legend tells of a poor maiden, into whose body as she slept by the shore of a lagoon the rays of the sun drove like the shafts from a celestial bow and caused her to be pregnant. She was delivered of a red jewel which, acquired at length by the chief's son, was changed into a fair girl and became his wife. A Siamese legend reported by a Jesuit father in the seven-

¹ Hartland, 12.

teenth century attributes the birth of the deity Sommonocodon to the same cause. The Admiralty Islanders deduce the descent of mankind from a woman who was fecundated by the sun.¹

I

THE LOTUS

A Gond story from Uprora Zamindari

A Sadhu stood on one toe for twelve years in penance. Mahadeo, being pleased with him, said, 'Ask anything you wish and I will give it to you.' The Sadhu said, 'I want nothing in the world but a son.' Mahadeo said, 'Go your way and I will give you a son.'

The Sadhu went to the bank of a lake and sat under a mango tree, wondering how he was to get his son. Two bumble-bees flew by and came together. When the Sadhu saw that sight, his seed fell from him and he put it on a lotus and sent it floating on the river. Now down the river Kamalapati Kaniya was bathing. She was a virgin. She saw the lotus floating on the water and picked it up to smell it. The seed went through her nose into her belly. She went home and after some time found that she was pregnant and was ashamed, saying, 'I have not seen the face of a man, how can I become pregnant?' When, after ten months, her pains began she said, 'O sinful one, come out of my body by the way that you came in.' Hearing this, the child was born through her nose. As he fell to the ground he said, 'Where is my father?' The girl said, 'I don't know.' The baby boy said, 'Carry me from village to village until we find him.' The girl carried the child from place to place till, at last, growing weary, she came to the lake where the Sadhu was sitting. When they came near, the boy jumped out of her arms and ran to his father, crying, 'Here is my father.' Then came Mahadeo and said to the Sadhu, 'You look after your son, but this girl is not for you.' So the girl ran to her home and the Sadhu kept the boy. The boy's name was Naksir Muni.

¹ Hartland, 25.

2

THE LUCKY CHILD

A Binjhar story from Sarangarh State

A virgin girl was living alone in the forest. When she was thirsty she used to go to search for water, but when the sun was very hot there was none to be had. One day she found a little water in a leaf on which the rays of the sun had fallen. She drank it and became pregnant. When the time came a baby boy was born. But the girl said in her mind, 'Here I am without a husband and if I take the child to the village every one will laugh at me.' So she left the child under a mango tree and went home. The next day a Raja came to the forest to hunt. His servants found the child and ran to him saying, 'Here is a boy so fine and delicate that his heel is like your tongue.' The Raja took the boy home and adopted him. When he grew up the Raja took him to that very place to hunt. On the same day the boy's mother had gone there to see whether he was alive or no. When the Raja saw the girl's beauty he fell senseless to the ground. His servants revived him and he told them to bring the girl to be his wife. On the day of their marriage she squeezed a little milk from her breast and it flew through the air into the boy's mouth and she knew that it was her own son. This made the Raja very happy and he declared that the boy should rule his kingdom when he was dead.

3

THE SAMBHAR'S SON

A Muria story from Kerawahi, Bastar State

There was a Raja who could not take a single meal without meat. So he went out daily to hunt. One day, as he was hunting he got very thirsty and went to drink water from a lake in the midst of the jungle. After quenching his thirst he sat down in the shade of a tamarind tree and ate some fruit. As he went away he spat this out onto the ground.

That evening came a sambhar and after drinking some water

under the tamarind tree and licked up the Raja's spittle. After a few days the deer found herself pregnant of the Raja's spittle and in due time she gave birth to a human child under that very tamarind tree. Leaving the child, the sambhar went to graze.

The Raja came by and sat down under the tree. He heard the child crying; when he saw him he was delighted with his beauty and said to his servants, 'I have no child. I will take this child home and adopt him.' He took the child home and gradually the boy grew up.

When the boy was grown, one day when the Raja was out hunting, the Rani and the boy were sleeping in the same house. The Rani desired the boy and tried to force him to embrace her. But he refused and she was so angry that when the time came for the Raja's return, she scratched her body with thorns and lay down. The Raja asked what the matter was, and at first she refused to tell, but at last she accused the boy of taking her by force and tearing her whole body. The Raja was very angry, and threw the boy into prison.

When the sambhar heard that her son was in prison, she came at night and stood before the Raja's door.

Standing there, she sang,

'O son, in the forest you were born,
You grew up in a house.
How were you ruined, my son,
That you fell into the prison?'

From within the boy sang in answer,

'I did nothing wrong, my mother,
It was the wicked queen that sent me here.'

The sambhar ran away, and daily returned at night and sang to her son. In time the servants of the Palace heard the song and went to tell the Raja. The Raja declared that it was a lie, but that night he went to hear. But when the sambhar came, he was asleep and heard nothing. He was very angry with his Diwan for lying to him, as he thought.

The next night the Diwan tied a thread to the Raja's finger, and when the Raja nodded he jerked it and woke him up. Thus the Raja heard the sambhar's song. The next morning he bade his

servants prepare a trap for the sambhar and that night they caught her.

The Raja came to see his captive and asked her, 'Why do you come here every night?' 'My son is in your prison', replied the sambhar, and then told the whole story. When he heard this tale, the Raja had his Rani buried alive. He took the boy out of jail and brought the boy and the sambhar to his Palace. He married the sambhar and she turned into a beautiful girl.

4

THE MONGOOSE AND THE DONKEY

A Baiga story from Bohi, Pandaria Zamindari

Three brothers and their wives were living in a village on the borders of the forest. One day the three women went to the jungle to pick mangoes. On that day all three of them had washed their heads at the end of their periods. As they went through the forest, night came and they lost their way. They grew very thirsty, but as they wandered to and fro they saw under a tree three leaf-cups. In one of them was the urine of a mongoose, and in the other two there was a man's urine. In the dark, the women thought it was water; and they drank it and became pregnant.

In due time, from the three women were born two boys and a mongoose. They grew up together, but when they were ten years old the boys said, 'Let's drive away this nasty mongoose.' It ran weeping to a Teli's house and became his servant. One day as it was on the oil-press, driving round the bullocks to bring out the oil, the Teli's little daughter began to cry. The mongoose said, 'Don't cry and I'll give you anything you want, but you must tell me where your father hides his money.' 'I don't know', said the child. The mongoose jumped on her and caught her throat with its teeth. 'Tell me, or I'll kill you', it said. 'It is buried under the hearth', said the child at last. The next day when the Teli went with his daughter to the bazaar the mongoose dug up the money and gave it to the Teli's donkey to eat. When the Teli came home the mongoose said, 'I must go to see my mother for I hear she is ill. Please give me my pay.' The Teli said, 'What pay can a mongoose want? But

the mongoose said, 'Give me that donkey, for I can ride home quickly on it.' So the Teli gave it the donkey and the mongoose sat on its back and trotted home.

After the mongoose had greeted its mother it said, 'Bring a rice-pounder and beat the donkey.' The woman brought the rice-pounder and the mongoose held a basket under the donkey's vent and said, 'O donkey, bring out the rupees.' When the mother beat the donkey, for pain it excreted all the rupees into the basket, but they beat it so hard that it died. Then the mongoose cut up the donkey's flesh and took it to the city to sell in the bazaar, crying, 'Buy my 'goat's flesh', and many people bought it.

Now when the two boys who had driven the mongoose from their house saw that it had become rich, they tried to copy it. They bought many donkeys and beat them, crying, 'O donkey, bring out rupees.' But the donkeys excreted nothing but dung. They were disappointed at this, but they thought they could still get a little money. They killed the donkeys and cut up their flesh and carried it to the bazaar, crying 'Buy our donkey's flesh.' But the people were angry and beat them. The boys returned home weeping and fell at the mongoose's feet and became its servants.

Then the mongoose taught them wisdom and showed them how to cut up the rest of the donkey's flesh and sell it in the bazaar as goat's flesh. After that, the mongoose and its mother bought a village and the two boys lived with them as their servants.

5

THE BIRTH OF A BABY

A Pando story from Uprora Zamindari

Hemesiri Kaniya lived in the jungle. She swung to and fro in her swing hanging from a banyan tree. Bhimsen came to her in the form of a child. 'Swing me vigorously', cried Hemesiri Kaniya. 'How can I? I am only a child.' 'Then swing me slowly', said Hemesiri Kaniya. Bhimsen pushed her and the swing swung more and more vigorously. Hemesiri Kaniya became frightened. 'I am sure to fall', she thought.

But Bhimsen caught her. She was excited and asked him to

come to her. 'I am doing penance for twelve years', he said. But from her desire alone a child was born.

The child's name was Nand-garo-ka. Directly he was born he got up and went, trailing his cord and placenta behind him, to his father. Bhimsen said, 'Go back to your mother. I have nothing to do with you.'

From that day children began to be born in the world. Hemesiri Kaniya went to Bhagavan and told him that if children were to be born simply as the fruit of desire it would be difficult for women. Bhagavan then made a rule that to make a child man and woman must come together first.

NOTE I

Saliva Superstitions

Saliva is everywhere regarded as having a magic power. A writer in *Folk-Lore* has given many examples of its use. In all parts of the world it is regarded as having medical value. Men spit in order to avoid infection and to throw out disease, to avert evil and witchcraft, to remove bad luck, to ensure a prosperous journey or to express contempt. Saliva may be used as binding a covenant, it is also regarded as a giver of life.¹ Selare quotes a Pyramid Text in which there is a legend of Re and Isis in a papyrus at Turin wherein the sun god had grown old; he dribbled at the mouth and his saliva fell on the ground. Isis collected it, and with some dust she kneaded it in her hand and fashioned a snake, which she animated, and it bit Re who in his anguish revealed to Isis his secret name, which gave her great power over him.²

On the other side of the world saliva is equally potent. Among the Flatheads saliva drops into a girl's mouth and she becomes pregnant. Among the Quinault and the Thompson Indians a girl conceives by having a man spitting on her stomach. In two Yana myths a child originates directly from masculine spittle without female intervention. The twin Quiche divinities Alipur and Xbalanque were born in consequence of their murdered father spitting into a maiden's hand. The Gypsies of Eastern Europe considered that water into which the husband had spat was one of the most potent charms for bringing about pregnancy.³

In India spittle is regarded as impure and Crooke points out that the European's use of the same tooth-brush day after day is regarded as an extraordinary impurity.⁴ Spittle here, as elsewhere,

¹ R. Selare, 'A Collection of Saliva Superstitions', *Folk-Lore*, L, 349 ff.

² *Ibid.*, 361.

³ *Ibid.*, 362.

⁴ Crooke, ii, 22.

may ward off the Evil Eye, and people commonly spit when someone specially hated passes by. But spittle also has a medicinal power. It may cure inflammation of the eyes, and fasting spittle is sometimes rubbed on wounds. From the Punjab comes the story of a man who suffered from sore eyes. A fakir dreamt that there was a serpent dwelling on the banks of a certain river which could cure him if it could be caught and its blood dropped into his eyes. But when the serpent was caught it turned into a man, and eventually healed the sufferer with his spittle.¹

¹ L. King 'Punjab Folk Tales', *Folk-Lore*, xxxvi. For some other examples see Penzer, viii, 59.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

AMONG the aboriginals of central India relations between brother and sister are of a peculiar tenderness and intimacy. The subject indeed is so interesting that any tale about it is certain of a hearing. There is a charming picture in Chap. VI, 4, of a brother and sister who face every difficulty and danger together. 'The brother and sister loved one another so much that they always ate from the same plate and slept in the same bed.' The stories in this chapter, therefore, are concerned with this relationship. The fact that they cast a sombre light upon it should not be taken to imply that murder and incest are common between brother and sister. I know of no actual case of murder and though examples of incest occur from time to time, they are sufficiently rare to cause a major scandal. There is, however, no taboo on the relationship as there is in other parts of the world and great freedom is usually permitted.

In this chapter two distinct types of story must be distinguished. The first is the well-known motif of a sister who is murdered or sacrificed by her brothers. In Stories 1 and 2 the murder is caused by sheer cannibalistic creed on the part of the brothers. In Story 3 it is due to a brother's anger and desire for revenge on a sister who has killed his pet. In Chap. XXII, 1 and 2, there is a hint of the sacrifice of a sister by her brothers in order to cause water to flow in a dry tank.

The second type of story is concerned with incest. In Story 4 the heroine drowns herself as a protection against her brothers' importunities. Story 5 describes an accidental risk of incest which never occurs in fact; the tale ends happily. Story 6 is similar but the intimacy between brother and sister is consummated and the story is a tragedy. In Story 7 two sisters are driven from their home by the incestuous desire of their brother. In Chap. XV, 8, a prince wants to marry his sister and when his desire is frustrated demands her death.

Let us now take these two subjects separately. The story of the five brothers who murder their sister because they like the taste of her blood which was accidentally mixed with their food is paralleled by tales recorded from the Ho,¹ Birhor,² and Manjhi.³

¹ Bompas, 466 and *J.B.O.R.S.*, iv, 336.

² Roy, *The Birhors*, 427.

³ *North Indian Notes and Queries*, iii, 65.

Among these tribes the tale is partly aetiological to account for the origin of the sabai grass. The Birhor tale may be briefly summarized. The sister cooks her brothers' food and accidentally allows some of her blood to fall upon it. They decide to kill her but the youngest brother objects. They take her to the jungle and persuade her to sleep on a machan. The six elder brothers shoot at her but all miss and then call the youngest and force him on pain of death to shoot. He aims his arrow in the opposite direction but it flies straight into his sister's body and she dies. The brothers then cut up and roast their sister's body, giving the youngest brother the entrails and legs. He takes them some distance away but cooks fish and crabs instead, burying the entrails and legs of his sister in the ground. Before long a bamboo stalk shoots up from the hole where the girl's legs were buried. Two old beggars want to cut the bamboo to make a guitar but as one of them raises his axe to cut it down, it sings to him begging him to leave it alone. But the beggar cuts it down and makes his guitar. One day the beggars go to the house of the six brothers to sing but the guitar warns them that this is an enemy's house and they leave it quickly and go to the house of the younger brother. There the guitar proclaims it to be its brother's house. The young man calls the beggars to supper and manages to exchange his guitar for theirs. Thereafter whenever the young brother goes to work his sister comes out of the guitar and cooks for him. After this has happened for some time the brother hides himself in the house and when she comes out of the guitar he catches her. He invites the six brothers to a feast in memory of their sister, a feast which she herself has cooked, and when it is over she appears to them. The brothers are so ashamed that they beg the earth to swallow them up, which it does, engulfing them. Their sister tries to save them by catching the tufts of their hair but in vain. The tufts remain above the ground and are turned into sabai grass.¹ The Ho version is very similar (except for a few minor variations) up to the point where the youngest brother buries his sister's body, but afterwards the course of the story changes. The younger brother builds a hut near his sister's grave and after he has been there mourning for some time she appears alive out of the ground and brother

¹ This is closely paralleled in an Uraon story recorded by Hahn. Grignard, 77 ff.

and sister live together happily in the jungle. A Raja comes hunting to the place, falls in love with the girl and marries her and gives the brother half his kingdom. Soon afterwards he begins to build a great tank and the elder brothers come for work. When their sister sees them she forgives them but they are so ashamed that they fall to the ground which opens and swallows them up, only their hair sticking out in the form of grass. Another Ho story recorded by Haldar¹ again follows the same course up to the point of the burial of the body. Then the brothers go home and tell their parents that they have sent their sister to her husband's house. The husband missing his wife goes out to look for her and on the way sees a karat tree growing out of an ant-hill, in which the youngest brother had hidden his share of his sister's flesh. A fruit is growing on the tree and the husband tries to pick it but as he draws nearer it rises higher and higher and eludes his grasp. At last he hears a voice which tells him that the tree must be cut down by his youngest brother-in-law if he would get the fruit. He fetches the boy who, when he has cut the tree, discovers his sister hidden in the hollow trunk. In this version of the tale the elder brothers are not punished but the girl goes to tell her parents what has happened and then returns with her husband to her own house.

The variations between these three stories and that in the text are interesting. Most notable is the part played by the dog in the Baiga and Agaria tales. In neither of our stories is there any punishment for the elder brothers.

Story 3 has some elements of comparison with the Santal tale of Dukhu and his Bonga wife.² But the Santal tale is not based on the relations between brother and sister. In the Gond tale in the text the hero's sister seems to be jealous of her brother's attachment to a fish and angry at his wasting his food on it. There is no suggestion that the fish is anything more than a pet and after its death we see it no more. But in the Santal story the fish is a Bonga girl whom the hero wants to marry and it is his brother's wife who spies on him and ultimately causes the capture of the fish. But as the fish is being cooked it turns into a girl and jumps out of the pot. The Gond tale is not rounded off neatly like a fairy story, but as is so often the case ends in a simple tragedy.

We must now turn to a consideration of the stories which

¹ *J.B.O.R.S.*, iv, 336.

² Bompas, 208.

have brother-sister incest as their dominant motif. The tale of Balosundri is a rare example of suicide. There is a Ho story of a little boy who commits suicide in a rather similar way by going slowly into the water. The reader will be reminded of other tales of girls going into the water as a sacrifice¹ but there is no motif of this kind here nor is there any happy ending. The Jhoria Muria tale is beautiful and dignified and a return from the dead would spoil it.

In Stories 5 and 6 a youth puts a mushroom outside his house and says that whoever eats it will be his wife. In Story 5 he does this deliberately hoping that his elder brother's wife (with whom, of course, he is permitted to have a romantic relationship and with whom he is in love) will eat it. By mistake it is eaten by his own sister and the boy declares in approved folk-tale fashion that he is now bound to marry her. The girl tries to escape but in vain and at night brother and sister lie together and afterwards the boy kills his sister and afterwards himself. Such is the Baiga version. But the Agaria story evades the final issue and marries the boy to a fairy. I have another version given me by a Gond woman in which the marriage is not consummated but brother and sister commit suicide, to save themselves from the sin. This is entirely in the tradition of the different tribes. The Baiga regard incest more lightly than the Gond or Agaria. The Santal tale of Kora and his sister resembles the Baiga story.² Kora puts a beautiful flower in his house and says whoever picks it will have to be his wife. His sister puts it in her hair and the parents say that it is obviously fated that she should marry her brother and they get ready for the marriage. The girl runs away and, as in the Baiga tale, goes to the top of a tall tree whither all her relations come to beg her to come home. As in the Baiga tale also a heavy storm drives the girl back to the house and there she lies down by her brother's side and undoing a nail-cutter that he wears on his waist she cuts her throat with it. When he sees her dead he too kills himself. 'In the morning the two corpses were found lying side by side and it was seen that their blood refused to mingle but had flowed in opposite directions. So they took the bodies away to burn them and laid them on one pyre, and when the fire lit it was seen that the smoke from the two bodies rose separately into the air.' Then all who saw it said, 'We wished to marry brother and sister but Chando

¹ Bompas, 102, for example.

² Bompas, 208.

would not approve of it; see how their blood would not mingle though spilt on the same floor and how the smoke from the pyre rose in two separate columns. It is plain that the marriage of brother and sister is wrong.'

A Konyak Naga song suggests a more tolerant attitude.

Yinglong and Liwang
They loved each other
Loving, they lay together,
Red as the leaf of the ou-bou tree
Flamed love and desire
On paths to the village.
The two lit fires,
Sky-wards, upwards curling,
The smoke of the fires united,
And mingled, never to part.

Here Yinglong loves her brother Liwang in a way severely condemned by Konyak sentiment. The lovers had to die, but before dying they lit fires whose smoke rising in two columns met and mingled and in the smoke they were for ever united.¹

A tale in which incest is forced upon brother and sister, who die soon afterwards, is told by the Chak.²

Once there was no water in the locality anywhere except in the house of a blacksmith. A brother and a sister being very thirsty went to the house of the blacksmith to drink water. When they asked for some water, the blacksmith told them that if they could live like a husband and wife he could give them water. In order to quench their thirst they were compelled to live as husband and wife and then drank water and died soon afterwards. After their death they became rainbows and appear in the sky occasionally. Still now two rainbows are seen at the same time. The bright one is the sister and the faint one is the brother.

An act of incest committed through ignorance is recorded in the *Archeological Reports*.³

There is a strange legend attached to the Kothila Math at Rajapur, which would make it a monument erected over the remains of a brother and sister who had become man and

¹ Fürer-Haimendorf, 'The Role of Songs in Konyak Culture', *Man in India*, xxiii, 73 f.

² *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part iii, B., 124.

³ Cunningham, *Archeological Reports*, xxi, 179.

wife in ignorance of their relationship. A Banjara's wife having died leaving two children, a boy and a girl, the father made the boy over to one friend and the girl to another. The two Banjaras having died, the boy and girl were married to each other by the friends. After some time the girl observed a mark on her husband's body and told him that she formerly had a brother with a similar mark. He then remembered that he had a sister very like her, and the two having become aware of their relationship, prayed that their sin might be forgiven. Then the earth opened beneath them and they were swallowed up. The Kothila Tower was then built on the spot out of the wealth which the brother and sister had left behind.

Story 7 of this Chapter is interesting because of the various themes and motifs that occur as if by association in a dream. We have the incest motif. This gives the association of the tall tree which bends down to save the sisters. This again associates with the girl going into the water of a tank. The survivor hides in the forest and a Raja finds her and takes her home. This again leads to the idea of the beautiful flowers that, in tales of the 'Wicked Queens' type, often grow up from the dead bodies of murdered children, and so we have an incident of this kind attached to the tale.

The theme of flowers or trees springing up from the dead body of a heroine has been discussed by S. C. Mitra in a paper published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.¹ He points out how 'this pretty conception, that the souls of dead men may spring up into trees or blossom forth in for flowers, is very common.' It occurs frequently in stories recorded in this book. In the Santal tale of the 'Magic Fiddle' a drowned Santal girl becomes a bamboo growing by a lake.² In another tale recorded from the same tribe the girl who was sacrificed by her brothers blossoms as a beautiful *upel* flower.³ In one of Frere's tales from Western India, a murdered heroine is transformed into a bright golden sunflower.⁴ Mitra suggests that this idea depends on the belief that 'there is a vegetation spirit or vegetable soul resident in the blood or flesh of the human body and that when the blood is spilt or the body is buried in the earth trees and plants grow up.'⁵ It may

¹ S. C. Mitra, 'The Juniper Tree Type of Tale', *J.A.S.Beng.* lxxi, Pt. iii, 13 ff.

² Campbell, *Santal Folk Tales*, 53.

³ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁴ Frere, 65.

⁵ *J.B.O.R.S.*, xii, 168.

be necessary to go as far as this. It is a perfectly obvious and almost conventional fairy tale idea that a beautiful flower could grow from the body of a beautiful girl.

In conclusion I must mention one story from this area in which the relations of brother and sister are unhappy not, as is usually suggested, because of the greed or lust of the brothers but because of the treachery of the sister. In a Ghotul Pata recorded at Markabera in Bastar a boy and his sister get left behind by the rest of the party at a beat for fish. The others laugh at them suggesting that they must have had intimacy but the elders do not take it as a joke and banish the couple from the village. The two have many adventures together but at last the girl falls in love with the son of a Churelin and in order to achieve a marriage of which she knows her brother will never approve she send him away to certain death. In the end the brother discovers his sister's treachery and cuts her to pieces with his sword.

The connection between incest and cannibalism is interesting and important. It is still further illustrated by a Pashai tale from Laghman in East Afghanistan.¹

There was a king who had one son and one daughter. The girl was a cannibal. The brother fled from her, and settled in another country, where he lived with a woman. He spent a long time there, and always kept two dogs. He returned to his father's city and found it desolate (his sister having eaten up everyone). Only his sister was there. She made preparations for eating him, and he became afraid. She said to him: 'I am going to eat you.' The brother replied: 'Good! Take a sieve and bring water in it from the river, and come back when you have sharpened your teeth.' The sister went to the river, but before she started she put a drum before him and told him to keep beating it. He caught a rat and put it on the drum. The rat jumped about on the drum and made it sound, and while it did so the boy ran away. The sister returned, and found her brother missing. She pursued him. The brother then ascended a tree, and she came below it. Just as she was about to eat her brother, his dogs arrived. He called to them: 'Eat her in such a way that not a drop of her blood falls to the ground.' The dogs immediately tore her to pieces.

¹ *Linguistic Survey of India*, viii, Pt. ii, 109 ff.

I

THE MURDERED SISTER

A Baiga story from Kawardha State

A Baiga and his wife had five sons and one daughter. One of the sons was still unmarried, and though the daughter's engagement had been arranged she was not yet married. Every day the five brothers went to work in their bewar, and the girl cooked their *pej* and carried it to them in the jungle. One day she made root curry, but as she was cutting it she cut her hand.

'Where shall I wipe the blood?' she said to herself, 'If I wash it in the water, my father will give me *gali*; if I wipe it on the wall my sister-in-law will give me *gali*; if I wipe it on my cloth, my mother will give me *gali*; if I wipe it on my sari my brothers will give me *gali*. But if I wipe it on these roots, then no one will ever know.' So she wiped the blood on the roots and cooked them. She took the food when it was ready to the bewar and gave it to her brothers. When they had tasted it, her eldest brother said, 'You have never cooked such good food; what did you put in it today?' 'Nothing', she said, frightened. Then the brothers got angry and said, 'Unless you tell us we'll not eat a thing.' Then at last she told them that some of her own blood was mixed in the root curry. The eldest brother thought, 'If the blood tastes so sweet, how much sweeter will be the flesh.' And he said to the others, 'Let us kill and eat our sister today.' They were all pleased except the youngest brother who was very sad, but they threatened that if he didn't agree they would kill him too. Then they took the girl further into the jungle. She had a pet dog with her. They came to a well, and there they killed their sister. The dog was very sad and said, 'I'll go and tell your father and mother.' So they killed it too. Then they cut the girl's body up, and wrapped the pieces in leaves and took it to the house, saying they had killed a *sambhar*. When the father and mother saw it they were very pleased. The youngest boy said nothing, but wept quietly. Then they boiled the meat, adding salt and turmeric and chillies, and when it was ready they sat to eat it. But the youngest boy sat near a crack in the ground and put all his meat into it. He only drank the gravy, he ate none of his sister's flesh.

Next day the marriage party arrived to fetch the girl for her wedding. The brothers said, 'She has already started, she went by another road.' So the party returned. Their road led them to the very place where she had been killed. Near the well a red lotus flower had blossomed. The bridegroom was thirsty and went to drink at the well. No one could see the flower save one blind man who was in the company and he cried out that there was a beautiful flower there. They went to pick it. First of all the boy's maternal uncle went to find it. Then the dog's ghost said to the girl's ghost—they were both there waiting by the well—'Your uncle has come to pick your flower.' But he too couldn't find it. At last the bridegroom found it. He picked it and put it in his flute. When he reached his house he stuck the flute into the roof.

At night, the flower in the flute turned into a most lovely girl. She came out and worked all night in the house. She gathered twelve baskets of cowdung, she fetched twelve pitchers of water, she swept twelve courtyards. Then she had a bath, cooked for the whole house and returned to the flute. In the morning, everyone asked who had done all this work, but no one knew. Every night it happened. At last the Baiga boy said, 'I'm going to see who is doing this.' He hid in a grain-bin and watched. As the girl was going back to the flute he sprang out and caught her. She said, 'Let me go, I am naked.' But he wouldn't let her go. 'Tell me who you are and I'll let you go', he said. Then she told him all that had happened. The boy shouted and woke the house, they brought lights and clothes, and that night they spent together in great happiness, and in the morning brought drums and danced.

The news spread everywhere and many people came to see the girl. Her brothers came but she wouldn't go out and see them. Only when her youngest brother came she greeted him with great joy.

2

THE FAITHFUL DOG

An Agaria story from Motinala, Mandla District

An Agaria had five sons and one daughter. When the sons grew up he married them, but the daughter remained a virgin and her

parents kept her with great love. One day the five sons and their wives went to the jungle. They found a dead bullock and brought it home. The parents gave the girl the liver to eat. The sons' wives were angry and jealous, saying, 'We will eat her liver.' Another day the five brothers came home thirsty and asked their sister to give them water. She had cut her hand and some of the blood had fallen in the water and made it red. The brothers liked the taste of the water and asked, 'Why is it so red?' She refused to tell for fear they would kill her, but at last they found out what had happened.

The brothers took the girl into the jungle, but the parents followed them and brought her home. Then they plotted how to kill her. Her father had given her a dog to play with. One day the brothers persuaded her to go to the forest to pick mangoes and they killed her on the way. The dog picked up her head and brought it home. But when the father saw it he thought it was the dog that had killed the girl and he beat it to death.

Soon afterwards the five brothers came home with the girl's flesh cut up into small pieces. When they saw her head on the floor of the house they were frightened and ran away; when the parents saw this, they realized who were the true murderers. They tied the heads of the girl and the dog in a cloth and took them to the Hill of Elephants. There was a Sadhu sleeping there; they put the heads down in front of him and went away. When he awoke and saw the heads he was frightened and cried, 'Away with you. Take your own shape and leave me alone.' The girl and the dog returned to life and lived together there on the Hill of Elephants. After a time the five brothers came to that forest to hunt. When the girl saw them she said to the dog, 'Le-le, Le-le' and it drove them away. They returned home and told their parents that the girl was there and they went to fetch her back. But when they wanted to arrange her marriage the girl said, 'This dog is my husband.' The brothers were very angry and went to live in another village, but the girl and the dog lived happily together with the old people.

3

THE TALE OF KAJAL THE FISH

A Gond story from Markam Tola, Mandla District

An old woman and her husband had one boy and one girl. The boy used to go daily to plough in the field, and the girl took him pej for his dinner. She used to put the pej down in the middle of the field and then wander away to pick bhoir fruit or do anything else. Near the field was a deep pit full of water, and in the water lived Kajal the Fish.

The boy—what did he do? Every day he drank the water of the pej and threw the rice into the water and the fish ate it. In this way the boy got very thin. One day the girl thought to herself, 'Every day I bring pej for my brother, but it does him no good; why is he getting so thin?'

One day the girl after putting the pej down in the field went and hid behind the bhoir tree, and so she saw how her brother only ate the liquid part of the pej and threw the rest into the water. The boy then drove his plough and when he was tired took the bullocks to graze. When he had gone the girl ran to the water and looked down into it, and there she saw the fish.

The next day the boy went to the bazaar to buy bangles and a phundara for his fish. When he had gone well on his way the girl told her parents that she had found a fine fish. 'Come, let us go and throw the water out of the pond and we'll catch it.' So the three went to the pond. The girl said to the father, 'You dig the earth and make a wall across the pond and we'll throw out the water.'

But when the father began to dig, the fish tried to stop him, singing,

'Don't dig, father-in-law, don't dig, father-in-law,

My name is Kajal the fish,

I have become your daughter-in-law.'

The father said, 'Do you hear what the fish says? I can't dig any longer.' So the girl said, 'Then mother you dig.' The mother began to dig, but again the fish sang,

'Don't dig, mother-in-law, don't dig, mother-in-law,

I am your daughter-in-law,

My name is Kajal the fish.'

The mother too said, 'Listen to what the fish says. I am not going to dig either.' Then the girl said, 'Very well, if you won't dig, then I'll dig myself.' And she began to dig. But the fish sang again,

'Don't dig, sister-in-law, don't dig, sister-in-law,
I am your sister-in-law,
My name is Kajal the fish.'

But the girl took no notice; she dug up the earth and made a wall across the pond and began to throw out the water. The fish sang again when she began to throw out the water,

'Don't throw out the water, sister-in-law,
I am your sister-in-law,
My name is Kajal the fish.'

But the girl did not stop and when she had thrown out the water, she caught the fish. The fish again sang,

'Don't catch me,
Don't catch me, sister-in-law, don't catch me,
I am your sister-in-law,
My name is Kajal the fish.'

But the girl took no notice and took the fish home. When she had taken it home, she said to her father, 'O father, cut this fish up into pieces.' The old man sat down to cut up the fish, but the fish said,

'Don't cut, father-in-law, don't cut,
I am your daughter-in-law,
My name is Kajal the fish.'

Then the old man said, 'I'm not going to cut the fish; it's talking to me.' So the girl said to her mother, 'Then you cut it up, mother.' So the mother sat down to cut it up, and the fish stopped her, singing,

'Don't cut, mother-in-law, don't cut,
I am your daughter-in-law,
Kajal the fish.'

And the mother also said, 'I'm not going to cut it up, it talks to me.' So the girl said, 'If you won't cut it up, I will.' And she sat down to cut it up herself. Then the fish sang,

'Don't cut, sister-in-law, don't cut,
I am your sister-in-law,
Kajal the fish.'

But the girl took no notice and cut the fish up into pieces. Then she wanted to cook it, but the fish sang,

'Don't cook, sister-in-law, don't cook,
I am your sister-in-law,
Kajal the fish.'

The girl took no notice and cooked the fish. Then she called her father and gave it to him to eat, but the fish sang,

'Don't eat, father-in-law, don't eat,
I am your daughter-in-law,
Kajal the fish.'

So the old man said, 'I can't eat this fish', and he left it alone. Then the old woman sat down to eat, but the fish sang,

'Don't eat, mother-in-law, don't eat,
I am your daughter-in-law,
Kajal the fish.'

The old woman also said, 'I am not going to eat this fish', and left it alone. Then the girl prepared to eat it, and the fish sang,

'Don't eat, sister-in-law, don't eat,
I am your sister-in-law,
Kajal the fish.'

But the girl took no notice and ate it, and put a little aside for her brother. When the boy came home from the bazaar, the girl gave the fish to him to eat. The fish sang,

'Don't eat, my husband, don't eat,
I am your girl,
Kajal the fish.'

When the boy heard this he pushed the food away and, washing his hands, went to the field to see the place where the fish had lived. Then he saw that the water had been thrown out and there was no fish there, and he wept much.

The next day the boy went to that field to plough. On the tree near by the bhoir fruit had ripened. All round the tree the boy made a fence with dry wood and grass, and made a small entrance. When

the girl came with the pej for her brother, he said, 'O girl, the bhoir fruit is ripe, go and pick some.' When the girl went into the enclosure to pick the fruit, the boy quickly shut the door and set fire to the fence. In this way the girl began to be burnt, and sang,

'The fire is burning from my ankles to my knees,
Quickly, quickly put it out, my wicked brother.'

But the boy answered,

'O wife, call me husband,
And I will quickly quench the flame,
For there is water close at hand.'

Then the girl sang,

'The fire is burning from my knees to my waist,
Quickly, quickly put it out, my wicked brother.'

But the boy answered,

'O wife, call me husband,
And I will quickly quench the flame,
For there is water close at hand.'

Then the girl sang again,

'The fire is burning from my waist to my mouth,
Quickly, quickly put it out, my wicked brother.'

But the boy answered,

'O wife, call me husband,
And I will quickly quench the flame,
For there is water close at hand.'

At last the girl died. When she was dead the boy dragged her body out, and took some of her roasted flesh and ate it. He took some more of it back to his home and told his parents, 'I killed a sambhar in the forest and roasted it at once; here is some of the flesh. I ate a lot, and the girl is still eating it.' He said, 'Mother, quickly cook and eat it.' So the mother and father ate the flesh, and then the boy said, 'You have eaten your own daughter's flesh. You killed and ate my fish, and in revenge I have today killed the girl and given you her flesh to eat.' At that the old man and woman began to weep bitterly.

4

THE TALE OF BALOSUNDRI

A Jhoria-Muria story from Kapsi, Bastar State

In a certain village, there lived an old man and his wife. They had seven sons and one daughter. When they grew up, all seven boys got wives and married, but the girl remained unmarried. Her name was Balosundri. One day, the eldest brother said, 'I am going to marry Balosundri myself.' But when she heard this she was angry and ran away from the house.

Balosundri went and lived on the shore of the great ocean, and made herself a boat. When it was ready she sat in it and went out to the middle of the ocean. Soon the family heard that she had gone into the middle of the sea, and the old parents with their seven sons hurried down to the shore. Standing there, on the edge of the water, the old man and his wife sang,

'Come back, come back, O Balosundri !
The goat has come for your marriage
Even now they are killing it.
Even now they are making the crown for your head,
Soon it will wither if you do not come.
Even now they are building the booth for your marriage,
Soon it will fall if you do not come.
Even now the marriage party is on the way,
Soon it will return if you do not come.
Come back, come back, O Balosundri.'

But from her boat in the middle of the ocean the girl sang in reply,

'Once you were my true father and mother,
But now you are my father-in-law and mother-in-law,
O boat sink into the sea, sink quickly, boat !'

Then came the six brothers with their wives. Two and two they stood by the shore of the great ocean and sang,

'Come back, come back, O Balosundri',

Just as their parents had sung, so they sang also. But the girl Balosundri replied,

'O brothers and sisters-in-law !
Once you were my true brothers,

Once you were my true sisters-in-law,
 Now you are my husband's younger brothers,
 Now you are my husband's younger brothers' wives.
 May Jaora-baora¹ see your faces !
 O boat sink down into the sea, O boat sink, quickly.'

Last of all, the eldest brother came with his wife and standing on the shore, he sang,

'Come back, come back, O Balosundri !'

But the girl sang,

'O my eldest brother,
 Once you were my true eldest brother.
 Now you are my true husband.
 May Jaora-baora see your face !
 O boat sink quickly in the sea.'

As she sang these words, and they stood on the seashore watching, they saw the boat sink slowly. So Balosundri was drowned. And the old parents, with the eldest brother and his wife and the other six sons and their wives, went weeping from the shore back to their home.

5

THE MUSHROOM

An Agaria story from Bohi, Pandaria Zamindari

An old couple had seven sons and three daughters. The six elder brothers were married and the eldest brother's wife was very beautiful. The youngest boy who was unmarried, was always wondering whether he could ever get such a beautiful wife as that. One day he brought a mushroom home and put it on the mud platform outside the house thinking that if his elder brother's wife were to eat it she might marry him. So he said, 'Whoever eats this mushroom is my wife.' But it was his own sister who ate it.

When the boy saw that the mushroom was gone, he asked his eldest brother's wife who had eaten it and she answered, 'It was your sister.' The boy felt cold and sad and wept bitterly, but the

¹ This is probably a corruption of Jahura-Mahura; see p. 184.

woman said, 'Come along, boy, drink your pej. What's the matter with you?' But he said, 'I won't eat until I can get a wife like you.'

So away went the boy to the Biyaban jungle. When he reached it, a dry tree split with a loud crash and he heard the roaring of a tiger and the growling of a bear. The boy said, 'Hare, Ram', and lay down tired and hungry to sleep. Near by a Sadhu was doing penance, but when the boy went to sleep his beads refused to go through his fingers, and he wondered what was the matter. When the boy awoke he went to the Sadhu and the Sadhu's beads started to go through his fingers of their own accord. The Sadhu said, 'Are you a spirit or a ghost or a human being? What are you?' When he had heard the boy's story, the Sadhu gave him some ashes and told him to eat these in the place where people went for water. The boy took the ashes to a stone by the river and washed his hands. When he turned round he found that the ashes had turned into rice. When the boy had eaten rice he again went to the river to drink and there he found some fine clothes floating on the water. There was a ring tied in one corner of his dhoti. The boy dressed himself in the clothes and put the ring on his finger. Then the two sisters, Mahawasin and Kahawasin, chased him. The boy ran to the Sadhu crying, 'These girls are troubling me.' 'My son', replied the Sadhu. 'Here is more ash. Whenever you are in trouble eat a little of it.' The boy ate it at once and the girls were driven away, and he went back to the river and slept there. The two sisters, Mahawasin and Kahawasin, stole his clothes and put them on the river bank. They began to play hide-and-seek with one another and forgot the clothes which were carried away by the water.

Now in the boy's ring there was the life of Amarjodi Kanya, and at midnight Amarjodi came to take it away. But as she pulled it off the boy's finger, he awoke and caught hold of her. 'I will give you the ring', he said, 'If you will come and live with me.' Amarjodi said, 'There is a lovely girl in my house, and if you like her you may have her, but you must let me go.' But he took her by force to the Sadhu and the Sadhu said, 'My son, beware of one thing; while you are still on the road, do not go to this girl. For if you do, then from your seed which falls to the ground seven kinds of life will be born, and they will give you great trouble.' The boy took Amarjodi with him and set out for home. As he came near to

his village, night fell and overcome by desire he went to the girl and there the seven kinds of life were born. They seized all Amarjodi's ornaments and hid her in a banyan tree.

Now the boy's sister was living at home and the seven lives came to her with Amarjodi's ornaments and put them on her. They brought her to the sleeping boy and made her lie down beside him. When the boy awoke he did not recognize his sister nor did she know who he was, and thinking that she was Amarjodi he got up and set out for the house of a friend, but she led him to her own mother's house.

When his eldest brother's wife saw him, she cried, 'Well, have you brought as beautiful a wife as me?' He said, 'Look, your tongue is not as delicate as her heel.' But she laughed and said, 'You fool, it is your own sister.' He said, 'It is not, it is my wife.' Then everyone in the house said to him, 'It is your sister', and he, growing angrier and angrier, replied, 'No, it is my wife', and was about to carry her away by force. But his brothers were very angry, and they killed him and cooked his flesh and ate it.

After many days a crow picked up one of the boy's bones and dropped it by the banyan tree in which Amarjodi was hidden. A flower grew from the bone, a tall flower growing higher and higher. Amarjodi tried hard to pick the flower. That night she had a dream, 'If you can pick the flower we will live together always.' The next day she picked the flower and hid it in her sari, and at night it turned into a boy who stayed with her till dawn, when he turned again into the flower. This happened every night until at last Amarjodi had a child from the boy.

Now on the branch of a cotton tree near by lived a parrot with two chicks. One day the boy's eldest brother went there to catch the parrot and he heard Amarjodi's baby crying. He was startled and went to see what was hidden in the banyan tree. When he found Amarjodi he caught her and took her home, but she said always that she was in her period and stopped him from approaching her. So many days passed. Then from the flower which was her husband she had a daughter and all the family said, 'How is this child born? She must have some secret lover.' So they watched her night and day until one night that flower turned into a man. They rushed into the room and caught him. But when they saw that

it was their own brother they were very happy, and from that day he remained a man always.

6

THE BROTHER AND SISTER

A Baiga story from Kawardha State

A Baiga and his wife had seven sons and one daughter. Six of the sons were married, but not the youngest. One day the youngest boy went to the bewar and brought a mushroom. He put it in the house and said, 'Whoever eats this will be my wife.' No one ate it, but his little sister did so by mistake. Then the six sisters-in-law said, 'Who has eaten it?' 'I have', said the little girl. 'Then you'll have to be his wife.' But the girl thought they were only joking. When her brother came back from the bewar, however, he told her that she would really have to marry him. When she heard that she was very angry. She took the seed of a semur tree in her hand and went to the jungle. There she sowed it, and said, 'If you are truly a semur tree, grow at once.' Immediately it was as high as her waist. Then she said, 'If you are truly a semur, don't break when I sit on you.' So she sat on it and it did not break. Then she said, 'If you're truly a semur, climb up into the sky.' The semur at once grew up into the sky carrying her with it.

Then all the family came to find her. Her mother called to her. 'Tell me, am I to call you *beti* (daughter) or *bahu* (daughter-in-law)?' The girl called down, 'How can I tell, am I to call you *dai* (mother) or *māmi* (mother-in-law)?' Then came the father. 'Am I to call you *beti* (daughter) or *bhai-bahu* (daughter-in-law)?' he cried. She answered, 'How do I know—are you my *mama* (father-in-law) or my *dada* (father)?' Then the elder brother asked, 'Are you my *bahin* (sister) or my *bahu* (younger brother's wife)?' She replied, 'Are you my *bhai* (brother) or my *jeth* (husband's elder brother)?' Then the sisters-in-law cried, 'Are you our *nanand* (husband's younger sister) or our *dharāni* (husband's younger brother's wife)?' She replied, 'Are you my *bhauji* (elder brother's wife) or my *jethāni* (husband's elder brother's wife)?' At last the youngest brother called to her, 'Are you my *bahin* (sister) or my *dauki* (wife)?' And she answered,

'How do I know—are you my *bhai* (brother) or my *dauka* (husband)?' Then they all went home.

At night there was heavy rain. They took their food and slept. The girl climbed down from the tree and came to the house. She stood at the door and cried to everyone in turn, but only when she took the name of the little brother did anyone hear. He got up and let her in, and cooked for her. When they had eaten, they slept together on one bed and he went to her. Then with his axe, he killed her, and afterwards himself. In the morning they all thought they were sleeping late and laughed at them, until they went in and saw what had happened.

7

THE JEALOUS QUEENS

A Dora-Kuruk story from Kaknar, Bastar State

There was an old widowed Rani who had a son and two daughters. She worked and somehow got enough to eat. When the children grew up, the boy said one day to his sisters, 'I am going to marry you.' The girls said, 'No, you are our brother; how can you marry us? That would be a great wrong.' But the boy said, 'No, I have no wife, and I am going to marry you two.'

When the old Rani heard this, she went at once to find a wife for her son, and that very evening married him in a booth made in an hour. But the boy was not satisfied; he again said to his sisters, 'I am going to marry you. Otherwise I'll kill you both.' Hearing this, the sisters were very frightened and ran away. As they went through the jungle they ate any fruit that they could find. The younger sister began to feel very thirsty and cried bitterly. The two sisters wandered about searching for water, but found none.

In that jungle was a tall sarai tree. The elder sister stood before it and said, 'O tree, are you our tree or whose tree are you?' The tree said, 'I am yours.' The girl said, 'If you are ours, then bend down.' The tree bent down and the two girls sat in the top branches. The elder girl now said, 'If you are ours, stand up again.' So the tree carried them up into the sky. They looked everywhere, but they could see no water. But at last far off they saw a city and near it a Raja's lake.

Once more, the elder girl said, 'O tree, if you are our tree take us to that lake.' The tree took them there, but they found that all the water had dried up.

The little girl had a ring on her finger, and she threw it into the lake and at once water filled it. The two girls drank a lot of water, and then the little girl said, 'I want my ring' and began to cry. The elder sister went into the water and said, 'Do you love me or your ring?' The girl said, 'I want my ring.' The elder girl went in further up to her waist and said, 'Do you love me or your ring?' The younger girl said only, 'I want my ring.' Her sister went further still, and the water was up to her neck, and said, 'Do you love me, or your ring.' The younger girl said, 'I want my ring.' Then the elder sister went under the water, and with one hand threw the ring to the shore, but she herself was drowned.

The younger girl put the ring on her finger and called and called on her sister to come. But her sister was dead. She climbed the mango tree and sat there weeping.

Now the Raja of that city came to the lake to shoot the ducks. He lay down in the shade of the mango tree. The girl was weeping and her tears fell on the Raja. He asked what it was and his barber saw the girl and said, 'There is a girl in the tree, a very beautiful girl; her foot is like your tongue, it is so delicate.' The Raja said, 'Bring her down, I will marry her.'

The Raja had six wives, but he had no child. He married the girl and soon she was pregnant. Every day the Raja used to go out hunting, so he gave a flute for Joy or Sorrow to her, telling her to play it according to her happy or unhappy fate. The six Ranis were very jealous and they got hold of the flute and made it sound the tune of Sorrow. The Raja came hastily to see what was the matter. The six Ranis said, 'This is the folly of your young wife. There is nothing the matter, and she frightens you like this.' The Raja was angry and said to himself, 'Next time I hear the flute, I'll take no notice.'

When the young Rani's time drew near, the six Ranis told her to cover her face so that the baby would be born more easily. When the child was born, the Ranis took him with his cord and placenta and threw them all into the lake. They put a broom by the girl, and sent for the Raja. When he came, they said, 'Look at this young baggage; she has been delivered of a broom' and they laughed

loudly at him. He was very angry and drove the young girl out of his Palace.

Under the waters of the lake, the new-born baby met the elder sister of his mother who had been drowned there. She took the child in her arms and nursed him. The placenta floated to the bank and from this 'flower' there grew a lovely flower.

A Brahmin went to bathe in the lake and seeing the flower tried to pick it. But the flower retreated before him and he could not pick it. He went to the Palace and told the Raja that there was a beautiful flower by the lake, fit only for a king. Then the Raja Saheb, Kuar Saheb and Diwan Saheb went to pick the flower. The baby was sitting in the flower. The Raja tried to pick it, but it ran from him. Then said the Raja,

'O boy, give me the chapa flower,
Give me the dondera flower.'

The boy sang an answer to his mother's sister,

'O mother, O big mother,
They want the chapa and the dondera flower.'

And she answered,

'O boy, O boy, who wants the flower?'

The boy replied,

'O mother, O big mother,
The Raja Saheb wants it,
The Diwan Saheb wants it,
The Kuar Saheb wants it.'

Then his mother's sister sang,

'My child, don't give the flower to them;
Give it to no one but your own mother.'

Then one by one everyone came to ask for the flower, the six Ranis asked for it, but the boy always refused. At last the Raja said, 'There is one Rani left; call her.' They went to fetch her, but she said, 'It's many days since I had a bath, there are lice in my hair, I have nothing but this torn sari to wear. How can I come?' When the Raja heard this, he sent seven pots of hot water and seven

pots of cold water for her bath, and the best sari. When she was ready she came to the lake, and asked for the flower.

‘My child, my child, give me the chapa flower,
Give me the dondera flower.’

Hearing this, the boy came with the flowers into her lap. The Raja was astonished and asked the girl what had happened. The boy cried, ‘This is my mother and you are my father. When I was born, your six Ranis covered my mother’s face, and they threw me in the lake and put a broom by my mother.’

Then the Raja said, ‘Come home with me.’ But the boy said, ‘No, I won’t go.’ So the Raja had the six Ranis killed and buried beneath the threshold. He put a mark of their blood on the foreheads of the boy and his mother, and then at last they went home with him, and they lived happily together.

8

THE FURNACE

A Pardhan story from Patangarh, Mandla District

There lived seven brothers who had only one youngest sister who was the darling of the family. All the brothers except the youngest were already married. The youngest brother was the most popular. He never worked in the house. One day as he was wandering idly through the jungle he saw his sister alone. She looked very beautiful and he began to think about her. ‘Why don’t my parents and brothers marry me to her?’ However, he left her and wandered alone in the jungle where he found a very beautiful mushroom growing. He picked it and returned home. He took it to his house and put it in a prominent place where they usually used to burn the lights.

When the six sisters-in-law came in, he pointed out the mushroom to them and said, ‘Bhauji, remember. She who eats this mushroom, I will marry her. It may be anyone, my mother, my bhauji, in caste or out of caste. But that person will I marry.’ After some time when he had left the house, his sister came in having had a bath in a nearby lake. She saw the mushroom and at once took it in her hands and said, ‘Sisters, I am going to eat this.’ The six sisters were very worried and tried to persuade her not to eat it. They

told her that they would get her any amount of mushrooms, but begged her not to eat that particular one. But the girl said that she was in love with it, it looked very beautiful and she must eat it. At last they said that it had been put there by her own brother who had declared that he would marry whoever ate it. The girl laughed at the very idea and said, 'O my brother! He will never think of marrying me'. She said they were laughing at her, and ate it up.

Now the brother came back from his wanderings, and after tying his horse in the stable came in and found the mushroom was not there. He began to shout and asked everyone who had eaten it. The boy was very popular and always had his say in the house. He insisted now on being obeyed and ordered the parents and brothers to prepare for his marriage.

All the arrangements were made, though everyone was feeling very sad about it and said, 'This is the Kaliyug.' But they had to get ready. No one had any say in the matter and everyone had to put their hands on their mouths and keep quiet. So beloved was the boy among them. Kodon was given to a widow living next-door to be husked. This woman was very poor. She had a few chickens and made her living by selling the eggs. When the chickens saw the kodon in the house, they began to eat it and the old woman said, 'Don't eat this kodon of the Kaliyug. This is sinful kodon that is going to be given in the sinful marriage of a brother and sister.' This the poor girl overheard and it hurt her greatly. So as the drums began to thunder and the haldi was being ground, she ran away from the house into the jungle. There was a very tall tilwan tree. She said to it, 'O meritorious tilwan tree! If you are a true tree, spread your branches on the ground.' When she said this, the tilwan tree spread its branches on the ground. The girl sat on one of them and again said, 'If you are a true tree, take me up into the sky.'

Now the brother suddenly realized that the girl had run away, and went in search of her. On the way he found a broken bangle belonging to her and thus knew what way she had gone. As he went near the tilwan tree, he looked up and there saw his sister sitting on the topmost branches. The boy tried to say the same words to the tree that his sister had said, but the tree would not pay any attention. But when he threatened to cut the tree down, it was afraid and spread its branches on the ground. When the

girl came near the ground, she jumped and ran for her life. The boy found himself stuck in one of the branches and was carried up into the sky instead. However he climbed down and began to chase his sister.

The girl ran and ran till she reached a village where an Agaria was working at his kiln. The girl said, 'O Agaria, if you are a true Agaria, put me in the kiln and burn me.' The man was surprised and naturally refused to do so. But when the girl told him her story, he agreed to do what she asked. He put her into the kiln and began to blow the bellows. Meanwhile the brother also arrived there. He begged the Agaria to put him into the furnace as well, and the man did so.

When the boy went into the fire he saw his sister was becoming more beautiful than ever in the flames. But he himself was soon consumed in the furnace and turned into charcoal. After some time the Agaria stopped blowing his bellows and removed the girl from the kiln. Just as gold becomes more pure and more beautiful after being melted in fire, so had this girl become more beautiful and bright. But of the brother there was no sign at all. The girl went home to her village and in due time was happily married.

THE RELATIONS OF MEN AND ANIMALS

THE relationship between animals and human beings, on the one side a relationship of hostility and revenge, on the other an attitude of gratitude and co-operation, has been widely distributed throughout the folk-tales of the world. The first story in this Chapter represents one of the most famous incidents of oral literature but is given, as so often in central India, a completely fresh interpretation. It is on the theme of the ungrateful animal which is almost invariably, at least in India, combined with the 'Show Me How' motif. The story of the tiger which is released from its cage by a kindly human being, generally a Brahmin, and then treacherously desires to devour its benefactor, a fate from which the Brahmin is saved by the intervention of a jackal which tricks the tiger back into its cage, appears in almost every collection of folk-tales that has been made and has found its way into the text-books of primary schools throughout India. A typical example of this motif, which descends from the *Panchatantra*, is to be found in *Wide-Awake Stories*. A tiger is caught in a trap and cannot get out. A poor Brahmin comes by, and the tiger cries, 'Let me out, O pious one!' 'Nay', says the Brahmin, 'You'd eat me if I did'. 'Not so', replies the tiger. 'I should be for ever grateful, and serve you as a slave'. At last the Brahmin lets it out, upon which the tiger seizes him, saying, 'What a fool you are! Now I shall eat you'. The Brahmin pleads for his life, but all he can gain is a promise from the tiger to abide by the decision of the first three things he chooses to question. The Brahmin refers his case to the pipal tree, but it says men are ungrateful, and ought not to be allowed to live: 'Don't I give them shade and shelter? And don't they tear down my branches to feed their cattle on?' He next asks a buffalo. 'No; man has no gratitude. When I gave milk they fed me; but now that I am dry they yoke me and half starve me.' Last of all the question is put to a jackal, who wants to know how the tiger got into the trap, before giving an opinion. So the tiger enters the trap, where it is 'left lamenting' and gnashing its molars in grief.¹

¹ Steel and Temple, 116. Other versions will be found in *Indian Antiquary*, xii, 170; Parker, i, 339, iii, 348; Frere, 198; Stokes, 17; Bompas, 149, 312; Swynnerton, *Romantic Tales*, 303; and no doubt elsewhere.

The story in the text is a remarkable variant on the classical and historic model. The story-teller, who was a member of the Bagh or Baghel clan, which has the tiger as its totem, regards the incident from an entirely new angle. All the previous narrators seem to regard it as the proper thing that the Brahmin or other human being should be saved and the tiger condemned to a miserable life and death in captivity. Not so the Pardhan member of the Baghel sept. To him the continued existence of one Brahmin more or less is a matter of little consequence. The important thing is that the honour and freedom of the tiger should be maintained and that his totem animal should get its proper meals. So we find that although the story runs its normal course up to a certain point—the Brahmin releases the tiger, the tiger decides to eat the Brahmin, they consult a number of arbitrators all of whom decide against the Brahmin—the plot then changes. The fox who has been in attendance all the time does not interfere in the affairs of its uncle, the tiger, and after the final arbitrator has given his opinion, the tiger kills the Brahmin and uncle and nephew share the feast.

The other stories in this chapter are on a theme which is the very opposite of the foregoing. Now animals are grateful to their benefactor and help him in his hard struggle against the villainy and treachery of human beings.

The motif of 'The Grateful Beast' has been common in the folk-tales of the world from the days of Androcles and the Lion. Clouston suggests that the oldest and most widespread of these stories is that of the traveller who rescues a man and several animals from a pit in which they have fallen, the man afterwards showing the basest ingratitude to his benefactor while the animals are the means of his attaining wealth and honour.¹ Stories of this kind occur in Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (Book 5), the *Gesta Romanorum*, the *Panchatantra*, and the *Katha Sarit Sagara*². In this last story we read how a devotee rescues from a well a woman, a lion, a golden-crested bird, and a snake. Some time after, the devotee, being exhausted with hunger, is fed by the grateful lion with deer's flesh. And being again in sore want of food, the golden-crested bird brings him a casket of jewels. But as he goes to sell the jewels, he comes to the city where the woman he had rescued is living. Having secretly deposited the jewels in the house of an old woman, he

¹ Clouston, i, 232.

² Penzer, v, 157.

goes to market, and on his way meets the woman he had saved from the well, and they begin to talk. She tells him that she is now one of the queen's attendants, and asks him about his own adventures. He tells her of the jewels he had received from the golden-crested bird, and, taking her to the house of the old woman, shows her them. Now it happened that the bird had stolen this casket of jewels before the queen's eyes, and the woman goes at once to the queen and tells her that they are in the devotee's possession. The king, on hearing this, causes the devotee to be cast into prison, whither the grateful snake comes and says that it will coil round the king's neck and not let him go until told to do so by the devotee. The snake coils round the king's neck, and at last the devotee is sent for. He bids the snake, 'Let the king go at once', and the snake obeys, whereon the king gives the devotee half his kingdom.

The stories in the text vary from the standard models in that there is no question of any particular human being ungrateful, because the heroes show their kindness only to their animal friends. What they do, however, exhibit is the kindness and gratitude of animals and the high standard of morality among them as compared to that obtaining in the world of human beings. As examples of the classic type of grateful animal stories, we may give the tale from Purnabhadra quoted by Norman Brown. In this tale a poor Brahmin is driven from home by his wife with the injunction to secure means of sustenance for his family. He wanders in a wood, and while looking there for water finds a well into which have fallen a tiger, an ape, a snake, and a man (a goldsmith). All these he rescues, although the animals warn him against the ingratitude of mankind in general and goldsmiths in particular. On his way home the Brahmin becomes hungry and thinks of the ape, who appears at once and presents him with fresh fruit. Similarly the tiger gives him jewels from a prince he has recently killed. The Brahmin hastens to the city and takes the jewels to the goldsmith for appraisal. The latter at once recognizes the jewellery as his own handiwork, and to secure a reward accuses the Brahmin of murdering the prince. While bound and awaiting death the Brahmin thinks of the snake, who comes immediately and takes steps to save his benefactor. He bites the chief queen and she is cured only when the Brahmin strokes her with his hand. The truth is now made manifest, the gold-

for fear is punished, and the Brahmin is elevated to the place of Minister.¹

Similar stories have been recorded by Damant,² Bompas³ and many other writers.⁴ In Damant's tale, a prince after several adventures meets and lives with a woman. Although strictly enjoined not to go to the westernmost point of the surrounding country, he nevertheless journeys there one day, and finds in a well a man, a tiger, a snake and a frog. He pulls out the tiger, who thanks him and advises him not to rescue any creature without a tail. He then saves the snake, who gives him the same counsel. Next he draws out the frog, a tailless animal, who spits at him for his pains, and last the man, also without a tail, who basely seizes his rescuer and throws him into the well. Alarmed by the prince's continued absence, the woman goes to seek him, and rescues him.

The stories in the text reveal many variations around the general theme. Story 2 is nearest to the historic model but it, like the others, contrasts animal gratitude and goodness with human injustice generally rather than with the ill-behaviour of any one individual. It has some resemblances to the story in the *Katha Sarit Sagara*. The other stories are of the conventional type; indeed Penzer has said that tales in which grateful animals figure and help the hero or heroine out of difficulties or perform seemingly impossible tasks imposed upon them are found in nearly every collection of stories in existence. The idea of a reward following a kind action done when no reward is expected is a moral lesson which has appealed to story-tellers in all parts of the world, and the 'Grateful Animals' motif is another example of non-migratory motifs.⁵

In most of these stories the hero is faced by a number of ordeals in the successful accomplishment of which he is helped by grateful animals whom he has befriended. It is impossible to give more than a hint of the wealth of such stories throughout the world or even in India, but I will give one example from the Tamil romance entitled *Madana Kamarajan Kadai*, where the hero of one of the stories, called Jagatalapratapa, wandered over mountains and through forests and thickets, in search of his celestial wives. He spied a broad river before him, in which

¹ N. Brown, 'The Panchatantra in Modern Indian Folk-Lore', *J.A.O.S.*, xxxix, 28-31. Brown traces the tale to the *Jataka*, 73.

² Damant, *Indian Antiquary*, i, 118.

³ Bompas, 293.

⁴ As for example, Natesa Sastri, *Indian Antiquary*, xiii, 256; Upreti, 322; McNair and Barlow, *Indian Antiquary*, xxix, 403.

⁵ Penzer, v, 157.

several ants were struggling for their lives. The ant-king¹ saved was among the sufferers, and he called out to the hero, 'Travel, she whoever you may be, if you relieve me from my danger, I will relieve you also when you are in difficulty, whenever you think of me.' These words excited the king's pity, and he entered the river and extricated all the ants. Then the ant-king thanked him and took his leave. Going a little farther, he found a frog dying in the midst of burning sand. He was the king of the frogs. He too called to the hero, begging him to take him into the water, and promising to help him in return should he ever be in any strait. So he took the frog-king up and placed him in the nearest pond. At length he discovered his celestial wives bathing in a tank, and after he had unbraided them for deserting him, they took him up into Indra's paradise, to plead his case before the deity. Indra set him certain tasks, saying that if he executed them, his wives should be restored to him. Having caused his servants to reduce to the finest dust a tract of land, to scatter in it ten *kalams* of sesamum, and to plough it well a hundred times, he ordered the hero to heap up these ten *kalams* of seed without omitting a single grain, if he really deserved his daughters. The ant-king set his subjects to this task, which they accomplished perfectly. Then Indra threw his ring into a well inhabited by serpents, and the frog-king recovered it by compelling his subjects to jump into the well and become food for the serpents. Finally, the king was rewarded with the daughters of Indra in marriage.¹

Special reference may be made to Story 7 where the grateful snake is a very familiar character to students of folklore. The best known tales of this type are to be found in the *Jataka* and in the romance of Nala and Damayanti. In one of Miss Frere's stories a grateful cobra creates a beautiful Palace in the forest.² In a Santal tale a snake whose life has been saved by the hero gives him a ring which provides everything he wants, including a beautiful Palace and a lovely bride.³

All these stories are interesting examples of the influence of the doctrine of Ahimsa, that treaty of peace between the human and animal worlds, on the minds of Indian aborigines. It is true that none of these carry the doctrine to its logical conclusion. Few of them are vegetarian, most eat animals and even insects with an omnivorous lack of selection that horrifies

¹ Natesa Sastri, *Dravidian Nights' Entertainments*, 115-17.

² Frere, 16. Cp. Penzer, 1, 101.

³ Bompas, 90.

for fear of Hindu neighbours. But at the same time they have a feeling of unity with the brute creation. They live their lives in such close contact with the animals that they are often more sympathetic and kind to them than are members of the so-called higher cultures.

I

THE FAITHLESSNESS OF MAN

A Pardhan story from Patangarh, Mandla District

A fox and its mother were dying of hunger. They said to each other, 'Come, let us go to our uncle the tiger for help.' They went to the tiger and begged him to give them some food. Near its cave a cowherd was grazing his cattle. The tiger caught one of the bullocks and gave the fox and its mother the flesh to eat. Then the fox said to its mother, 'Let us watch our uncle and we too will learn how to kill cattle,' so they followed the tiger about for some time and saw everything it did. One day they saw a horse standing in a field. They thought it was a bullock and ran to kill it, but the horse kicked the fox away and killed its mother.

The fox went weeping to another village, where the people had caught a tiger and were keeping it in a cage. A Brahmin came to see it and the tiger said, 'Let me out and I will give you lots of money.' The Brahmin opened the door of the cage and the tiger jumped out crying, 'Now I am going to eat you.' But the Brahmin said, 'I have done all this for you, how can you eat me?' They talked and talked and talked until at last the tiger said, 'Let us go to the buffalo and it will judge between us.' When they told the buffalo the whole story, it said, '*Sāp guni bāgh guni admi jāt maha nirguni*. So long as I bear children and give milk, men look after me, but when I get weak and old they starve me and let me die. Men are faithless and ungrateful. Certainly you should eat this Brahmin.' But the Brahmin said, 'This judge is a fool; let us go to the horse.' When they had put their case before the horse, it said, '*Sāp guni ghoda guni admi jāt maha nirguni*. So long as I can carry men on my back and take their goods to market, they feed me and love me, but when I grow old they neglect me and drive me out to die. Certainly you should eat this Brahmin.'

Again the Brahmin said, 'This judge also is an ignorant fellow.

Let us go to the bullock.' The bullock said, '*Sāp guni bāg* saved *admi jāt maha nirguni*. So long as I can pull the plough and ^{she} in the fields for them, men do everything for me, but if I grow ^{stale} or old they forget all about me. Men are faithless and ungrateful. Certainly you should eat this Brahmin.'

Then the Brahmin said, 'Let us go to one more judge at least. They went to the Sun. The Sun said, 'Men are ignorant and foolish. I am a god and yet they relieve themselves in my presence with their faces turned towards me. Certainly you should eat this Brahmin.'

Hearing this, the tiger was very pleased. It sprang upon the Brahmin and killed him and uncle and nephew together shared the feast.

2

GRATEFUL ANIMALS

A Muria story from Khatgaon, Bastar State

A man and his wife had a son but the son died and in anger the father left his house. As he was going, the gods saw him and said, 'Why do you come to us? Go away.' The man replied, 'My son has died.' All they answered was: 'Go and fetch water from the well.' The man, therefore, went down to the well. As he was drawing water a monkey came by and said, 'Give me some water to drink, for one day you may come to my house and we will live as friends.' The man gave water to the monkey. Then came a tiger and said, 'Give me some water to drink, for one day you may come to my house and then we will live as friends.' The man gave water to the tiger. Then came a snake and said, 'Give me some water to drink, for one day you may come to my house and then we will live as friends.' The man gave water to the snake. The gods finding the water was so long in coming went away. When the man came there with his water-pot he found no one. 'What shall I do?' he said to himself.

The man went to the monkey which ran out of its house and placed a seat and washed its friend's feet with water. After the man had feasted on the monkey's food it gave him a few drops of the Water of Immortality.

Then the man went to visit the tiger which sent its tigress away

for fear the man would be frightened and it too washed its friend's feet with water and made the man sit honourably and feasted him with rich food. When he went away the tiger gave him a gold necklace.

As the man journeyed onwards he came to a new kingdom and sat down on the bank of a river to cook his food. He put his gold necklace on the ground beside him. A policeman came by and when he saw the necklace he arrested the man saying, 'You have stolen the Rani's necklace', and took him to the Palace. The man called on his friend the snake to save him. That night the snake came and bit the Raja so that he died.

The villagers were in great confusion and ran here and there for medicine, but the man said, 'I can save him', and the villagers felt at his feet begging him to do so. So the man told his friend, the snake, to draw the poison out of the Raja's body. The snake did so and the Raja recovered. Then the Raja thought in his mind, 'To the man who has saved my life I must surely give my daughter.'

All the villagers began to grind wheat and husk rice and prepare haldi and spices for the wedding. There were two Bhattra women there who went to wash the clothes for the marriage. Now in the bridegroom's dhoti there was tied the Water of Immortality. When the women opened the cloth they found this water and drank it, and they became young and beautiful motiari. When they came home with the cloth, the Rani said, 'Who are you?' for she could not recognize them. They said, 'We have drunk the water that was tied in the dhoti of your son-in-law.' Then the Rani too desired to be made young and the man went to his monkey friend and brought more of the Water of Immortality and gave it to them and with it he made his own son alive. Then with his son and his young wife he went back to live with his stupid Gondin. But the Raja gave them a village free of rent and they lived happily together.

3

THE MERCIFUL AGARIA

An Agaria story from Umaria, Mandla District

An Agaria boy was going through the jungle. A Lamana had put his wheat in a great heap by the roadside. A bird flew down to eat it and the Lamana picked up a stick and tried to kill the thief,

but the Agaria said, 'Don't kill the bird. Whatever loss you have suffered, I will repay.' So the Lamana let the bird go and the boy paid for the wheat.

Presently the Agaria saw the bird flying along beside him and soon it turned into a beautiful girl who said, 'I am always going to live with you.' They journeyed on together and saw a snake eating a frog. The Agaria said, 'Don't eat that frog and I will give you milk instead.' So the snake let the frog go and the boy gave it milk.

They went on their way and the frog hopped along beside them and soon it too turned into a girl who said, 'I am going to live with you always.' They came to a village and there they found the people beating a stag to death. The Agaria said, 'Don't kill the stag and I will give you money instead.' So the villagers spared the stag and the boy gave them ten rupees.

They went on their way and as they went, the stag turned into a horse and said, 'All of you sit on my back.' They did so and immediately found themselves at Jaitapur. The boy pitched his tent on the bank of the Raja's lake. The Raja sent his sepoy to say, 'Unless all trees growing by the lake give fruit before dawn the Raja will kill you.' The boy wondered what to do, but his bird-wife said, 'Don't be afraid. I will cover them all with fruit during the night.' By morning the trees were laden with fruit and the Raja was very pleased.

Next day the Raja took the boy to a great lake thirty miles long and said, 'If your horse can jump over this, I will give you ten thousand rupees.' The horse said, 'Don't be afraid' and took the boy on its back and leapt into the sky, landing easily on the other side. When the Raja saw this he was frightened and thought in his mind, 'How can I destroy this fellow?' He took his ring and dropped it into a very deep well. He said to the boy, 'Get my ring out of the well and I will give you half my kingdom, but if you cannot get it out I will throw you in also.' The boy wondered what he could do, but his frog-wife said, 'Don't be afraid' and she became a frog again and jumped into the well and brought out the ring.

So the Raja had to give the boy half his kingdom and his daughter in marriage. The boy took his bride to his home. As they went along the road together, when they came to the Palace where the boy had saved the stag, his horse died. When they came to the place where he had saved the frog, his frog-wife died. When they came

to the place where he had saved the bird, his bird-wife died. Only the Raja's daughter was left and he lived happily with her and they worked together in the forge.

4

THE ANTELOPE GIRL

A Muria story from Nayanar, Bastar State

A Raja went out to hunt and caught a pregnant antelope. He had her tied by the feet and carried home, but his son untied her and let her go. When the Raja heard what had happened, he was very angry and banished the boy from his kingdom.

As the boy was going sorrowfully through the jungle, the antelope came running to greet him and was turned into a beautiful maiden of twelve years. The Raja's son said to her, 'I am a banished man; don't come near me or you too will suffer.' But the antelope-girl took no notice and followed him through the jungle. After a time the prince grew very thirsty; he found a well with a little water in it, and stooped down to drink. There he saw a snake with a frog in its mouth; the frog was still living and crying 'Ter ter ter'. The prince could not kill the snake, for that would have been a sin for him, but he resolved to save the frog. He cut off part of the flesh from his right arm and gave it to the snake in exchange for the frog. The frog hopped away, and the antelope-girl brought water for the boy. Then they went on together to another country.

In the chief city of that land, a barber saw the girl and went running to the Raja and said, 'Here is a most lovely girl; you must certainly keep her in your house.' 'But how can I get her away from her husband?' said the Raja. 'Call for him, and tell him that if he doesn't bring you a pot of tiger's milk, you will have him hanged.' Next day, the Raja called the boy to his court and ordered him to bring a pot of tiger's milk forthwith, failing which he would have him hanged. The boy went home with so sad a face that his girl asked him what was the matter. When he told her, she said, 'Don't be afraid. I'll see that you get two pots of tiger's milk. Take your pots and go. When the tiger attacks you, raise your right hand, and it will do you no harm.' For she had put her magic on his hand.

The prince went far into the jungle and presently found a tigress sleeping with her two cubs. When the smell of a man came to them, the tigress leapt up and ran towards the boy. But he raised his hand, and the tigress paused, thinking, 'He comes from the house of my youngest sister.' She said to her cubs, 'He has come for milk, we must give it to him.' Then the tigress with her paws brought two pots full of milk from her teats, and gave them to the boy. She sent her two cubs to accompany him back to the Raja's Palace. When the Raja saw it he was afraid.

The next day, the barber came again, and said, 'Don't be afraid, you must certainly bring the girl to your house.' 'But what can I do?' asked the Raja. 'Send the husband to the country of the Rakshasa to fetch grain.' Once again the Raja sent the boy, and gave him his orders. The boy returned home with so sad a face that his girl asked him what was the matter. When he told her, she said, 'Don't be afraid, I'll see that you get twice as much grain as he has demanded. I will write a message on a measure, and when the Rakshasa see it they will give you the grain willingly.' The boy took the measure and went far into the jungle to the country of the Rakshasa. There a great Rakshasa was sleeping with one ear on the ground and one ear ever listening for the coming of a stranger. When she heard him coming she sprang up and rushed to devour him. But when she read the message on the measure she gave him what he wanted, and two of the ogres came to accompany him to the Raja's Palace. The Raja was very frightened when he saw them, and sent for the barber again.

The barber said, 'This time throw the Rani's necklace down the well and tell this boy to fetch it out.' The Raja called the boy again, and said, 'My Rani's necklace has fallen into the well: go and get it, or I will hang you.' The young prince went very frightened, and when he told his girl, she too had nothing to say. But the snake and frog came and went into the well and brought out the necklace; they gave it to the boy and he took it to the Raja.

Once more the barber went to the Raja, but the Raja said, 'There's nothing we can do; this boy is too clever for us.' But the barber said, 'Let us try once more. Call him and order him to make a grove of mango trees with fruit in a single night. He can never do that, and then you may hang him.' So the Raja did as the barber suggested. The prince went back to the girl with a sad face, but

she said, 'Eat your dinner; I will make you such a garden in the night. Bring me a sword, and two measures of salt, and clean the sword with the salt till it shines. Then I will become an antelope and run round the village, and when I return cut off my head with the sword.'

When night fell the antelope-girl went out and ran round the village; wherever she went, mango trees heavy with fruit sprang up. When she returned, the boy struck off her head with his sword, and the antelope became a girl again. In the morning, the Raja saw the mango trees everywhere, and had no more to say.

After some days, the prince decided to go home. They set out and travelled many days through the jungle till they came to the very place where the antelope had become a girl and followed the boy. There the girl said, 'I must go back to my people, and you to your father.' She embraced him and suddenly she was an antelope again and ran away into the forest. The prince returned alone to his father's house.

5

THE LUCKY FISH

A Khuntia Chokh story from Dhumarkachar, Lapha Zamindari

In the great city were twelve lakhs of spears.

A fruitful *mahua* ! A crooked *char* ! There three thousand children played.

The crab was walking down the river,

The buffaloes wallowed in pulse as if it were mud,

The boats were rowed across rice-water.

In that city the roads went over the roofs of the house.

In that city there was an orphan Kewat boy. He was very poor and there was no one to mourn for him when he should die, but at last he got work in the house of a rich Kawar and every day used to go to graze the cattle. In the month of Kartik, in the fields and threshing-floors the people went to get the grain and the boy went with them. They carried the harvest home to the Kawar's wife. Now this wife grew fond of the boy and every day used to give him rice to eat. But the boy put all the rice into a store-room and used to pick leaves from the jungle and dig up roots and lived on these instead. Gradually, he got a great store of rice.

One day his master said, 'My boy, you have worked many days for me, now I will arrange your marriage.' Many Kewat, when they saw the boy's rice, wanted to give their daughters to him and it was a rich man's daughter whom he married. Now the boy worked very hard and would have become rich, but his wife ate up everything that he earned. When the boy came home tired from work, his wife used to say, 'Go and bring me wood, bring me water, clean the rice for supper.' If the boy refused his wife beat him, so they became very poor and the boy grew thin with sorrow and misery.

One day he asked his wife to prepare some parched rice. She said, 'I didn't come to your house to work for you, I came to enjoy myself.' She picked up a piece of wood and beat him violently. He went weeping out of the house and took his fishing-net to the river. He sat down on the bank and wept bitterly. Then he threw his net into the water. Now the great fish called Raghuman was swimming by and got caught in the net. The boy ran to get a stone to kill it. But the fish said, 'Don't kill me, I have come to help you. Why are you crying?' The boy told the fish all about his wife and the fish said, 'Your wife is a Dano and one day she will eat you.' Then the fish gave the boy a jewel to put in his ear, and said, 'Bring a cocoanut and I will be your Mahaprasad; whenever there is any trouble call me and I will come to help you.' When the ceremony of friendship was over the great fish Raghuman gave the boy a lot of little fish to eat and he took them home to his wife. But she was angry and saying, 'I don't like the taste of fish,' threw them away and drove her husband out of the house. The boy went and hid himself in Mahadeo's temple on the bank of a lake.

The Raja of that town had a very beautiful daughter. There was a blind Brahmin whose son used to go to teach her to read and write. They fell in love with one another. The girl said, 'You must run away with me or I will kill myself' and they arranged to meet by night in Mahadeo's temple.

But when the Brahmin heard of it, he was afraid and persuaded his son not to offend the Raja. So the boy stayed at home. But the Raja's daughter went with a friend to the temple that night and they went in to find the boy. The Kewat boy was hiding there and would not come out, thinking it was his own wife who had come to find him. But the Raja's daughter dragged him out of the temple, put him on a horse and they all rode away. In the morning they saw

that it was a different boy. What were they to do? They were afraid to go home and they sat by the river-bank in great perplexity. Then came the great fish, Raghuman, and said they should both become the wives of the Kewat boy. It gave them a house by the river and provided them with everything they wanted.

6

THE RAKAS AND THE BAIRAGI

A Raja-Muria story from Mandar, Bastar State.

There was a city where men saw rupees without eyes and dug pits without hands or feet, where two bullocks could go where one could not, where only the married and the mothers could enter and the way was barred to the unmarried and the childless, where nine lakhs of roofs stood on the point of a needle. There lived a Bairagi. One day he went to where they were pressing *gur*, and everyone received him with great honour, giving him two sticks of sugar-cane to eat.

But the people said, 'O Maharaj, do not eat this cane on the road; only when you get thirsty, then eat it.' The Bairagi went to the Palace of a great Raja to sell it. The Raja asked, 'What can this can do?' The Bairagi said, 'If you are thirsty, it can quench your thirst.' 'Then how much is it?' 'A potful of gold coins.' At this the Raja's mind fell, but his children cried for the sugar-cane, so at last the Raja gave the Bairagi what he demanded.

When they had all eaten the cane, they put the scraps and knots that were left in a field. When these had grown, they again put the knots in another field until there was a big crop of sugar-cane. When they were ripe and ready, the wind came and carried the scent afar.

In the midst of nine mountains lived a Rakas, and the scented wind came to his nostrils, and went inside. 'It was not today, it was not yesterday, what smell is this?' thought the Rakas, and arose and went up the wind.

Following the scent on the wind, the Rakas came at last to the field of sugar-cane. He went in, sat down and began to eat. The Raja heard that some animal had got into the field and was damaging it, so he called his people and sent them to kill it. The people

surrounded the field and began to beat it. The Rakas had by now eaten all the sugar-cane, and he fell on the people and began to devour them. When he had killed and eaten them all he went away.

At that time there was no one left in the Palace save the Lalpila and the Babidhani. The brother and sister thought, 'We mustn't stay here or the Rakas will come back and eat us too.' So they ran out of the Palace and went to Hetuban-Setuban-Surujban, the great jungle. In that jungle the tendu trees were in fruit and none had fallen to the ground. At the top of one of the tendu trees was a monkey cub, whose name was Tima. The Lalpila climbed the tree and caught the young monkey and began to beat it. Then said Tima, 'O big brother, don't beat me. Take me with you, and one day or other I'll be able to help you.' The Lalpila said, 'Throw down a lot of tendu fruit for us to eat and I'll let you go.'

Tima threw down the fruit and the Lalpila and Babidhani went on their way with the young monkey. Presently they came to the very place where the Rakas was sleeping. When the Rakas saw the brother and sister he caught them and ate them both, but Tima jumped into a tree and escaped. Then thought Tima, 'What am I to do?' and he picked up a stone and sat on the ogre's head. He began to beat the Rakas with the stone. The Rakas said, 'Don't hit me, brother Tima. Johar, brother Tima.' But the little monkey said, 'I will kill you unless restore the Lalpila and Babidhani.' So the Rakas brought out of his belly the Raja and Rani, then all the citizens that he had eaten and at last the Lalpila and Babidhani. They lay on the ground, limp and dead. Then said Tima, 'Give them back their lives; if you don't make them alive I'll kill you.' So the Rakas made them all alive. Then said the little monkey, 'Take them on your back and carry them to the city.' So the Rakas took them on his back and carried them to the city. When they got home Tima said, 'You didn't kill me, and in return I have made you all alive again. Now I go home, having paid my debt.' And Tima went away to the jungle.

Then the Rakas said to the Lalpila, 'I want to live with you.' He turned himself into an elephant and remained always in the Palace as the servant of the Lalpila.

7

THE SNAKE'S RING

A Gond story from Karanjia, Mandla District

There was an old woman who had one son. One day the old woman's brother was going to the jungle to fetch bamboo and she sent her son with him. But after a time the uncle got angry with the boy and abused him and told him to go home. But the boy went on and brought home some bamboos. Then they made a fishing-trap and went to catch fish in the tank. They fixed the trap in place and went home.

When they returned to see what they had caught they found that there were many fish in the boy's trap but only a few in the uncle's. The uncle was very annoyed at this and accused the boy of secretly putting fish from his trap into his own.

The next day the boy put his trap a long way off. When he returned, what did he see? A snake was sitting in front of the trap and there was not a single fish in it. The boy raised his stick to kill the snake, but it said, 'Don't kill me and I'll give you a beautiful wife. Wait here for me and I'll bring her.' The boy waited and the snake went down under the ground and soon came back with its own daughter. The girl said to the boy, 'When my father asks you if you want anything, ask for a ring but nothing else.' Presently, after the marriage was over, the snake said to the boy, 'Ask what you will and I'll give it.' The boy said, 'I would like a ring, nothing more.' The snake said, 'No, ask for something more.' But the boy said, 'No, I want nothing else.' The snake said, 'Keep the ring for a month and then give it back.'

Then the boy and girl went from village to village. One day they came to the edge of a forest and seeing a pleasant place, cow-dunged it and placed seven folds of cloth upon it. The boy touched the cloth with the ring, and at once a great seven-storied Palace was standing there. Then he made horses and servants and much wealth. After a month the snake came for his ring and took it back. But the boy and his wife were wealthy now and they lived happily, while the uncle went on catching fish in the tank.

TIGER STORIES

IN this chapter I give half a dozen stories on the familiar theme of the stupidity of tigers. The first story connects with the interesting echo-word motif. The echo-word is a formation found in most languages of India. It was discussed in *Circulars of the Linguistic Society of India* in 1928 and ten years later was applied by Emeneau to the subject of folk-tales.¹ In central India these echo-words are often picturesque and amusing. I remember a Brahmin applicant for a post describing his qualifications as the knowledge of 'cooking, gas² and *cycle-ickle*'. A very common expression in Bastar is *āking-wāking*, *āking* being the Gondi word for leaves and the double expression implying all forms of forest produce. Often the second part of the expression amplifies the first. *Agi-bugi* means 'fire', but *bugi* suggests the fire is leaping *bug-bug* like an excited girl. *Ragra-jhagra* is a quarrel where one follows another cursing and abusing. *Rudhwa-budhwa* is used for an old man: *rudhwa* means 'tough' as an old goat is tough. An expression like *tilai-bilai* is really a very condensed proverb. *Tilai* is a cooking-pot—and 'where there's a pot, there's a cat.'

Emeneau was the first to draw attention to this linguistic usage as a motif of the folk-tale. 'A man says aloud to himself or to his flock that precautions must be taken against any tiger or demon that may come to do mischief. In each case the tiger or the demon is represented by an echo-word. A tiger or a demon overhears and, in accordance with the general stupid nature of these creatures in the folk-lore, misunderstands. It knows that it is itself the tiger or the demon, but does not know what the meaningless second member of the compound denotes and fears that it is something even more terrible than itself. Some unexpected event then happens to it, and it is outwitted, thinking that the agency of this event is the fearsome creature denoted by the meaningless word'.³ In illustration of this

¹ M. B. Emeneau, 'An Echo-Word Motif in Dravidian Folk-Tales, *J.A.O.S.*, lviii (1938), 553 ff. Cf. M. Bloomfield, 'The Fable of the Crow and the Palm-Tree', *A.J.P.*, xl, 23 ff., where there is a reference to a tiger afraid of 'Perpetual Dripping', and N. Brown, *A.J.P.*, xlii, 137 and 145-147.

² That is, how to manage a Petromax lamp.

³ Emeneau, *op. cit.*, 555.

Emeneau quotes the Tamilian story 'Mighty of Mouth', a Kota tale, a Coorg tale and a story recorded from the Toda tribe.¹

The latter part of the second story is the very common children's tale which is now in the school text-books, and probably reached the narrator from a child who had been to school. The former theme also is common enough and may be paralleled throughout the whole range of European, Persian and Sanskrit literature. As an example of the kind of story current elsewhere, we may give the Kashmir tale from Steel and Temple's *Wide-Awake Stories*. 'One day a farmer went to his field to plough with his bullocks. He had just yoked them when a tiger walked up to him and saluted him. When the farmer returned the salute, the tiger said that the Lord had sent him to eat his two bullocks. The farmer promised that he would bring him a fine milch-cow instead. But his wife objected, and, putting on the farmer's best clothes, set off, man-fashion, on a pony to where the tiger was waiting. She called out, "I hope I may find a tiger in this field, for I have not tasted tiger's flesh since the day before yesterday, when I killed three." The tiger, on hearing this, turned tail and fled into the jungle, where he met a jackal, who asked him why he ran so fast, and was told that a tiger-eating demon was after him. The jackal tells him that it is only a woman; but the tiger is still afraid, and the jackal and he knot their tails together, in order that one should not escape at the other's expense. When the woman sees them she calls out to the jackal, "This is very kind of you to bring me such a fat tiger; but, considering how many tigers there are in your father's house, I think you might have brought me two." The tiger, more frightened than before, ran off, dragging the jackal after him, and the officious jackal was killed by being bumped against the stones.'²

Story 4 is an account of two adventurous boys who pull off the tail of a tiger and eat it. This motif is paralleled in the Santal tale of Kora and Guja who twist off the tail and after eating it find it so delicious that they decide to hunt the tiger and eat the rest of him.³ The tiger's tail also features prominently in the Ho story of Hunchback and One-eyed.⁴

¹ Emeneau notes 'the sketchiness and almost taciturnity of the Toda story-telling technique'.

² Steel and Temple, *Wide-Awake Stories*. This tale occurs in the Sanskrit *Suka Saptate* and is paralleled by the Persian tale of Amin and Ghul. See also Clouston, *The Book of Sindibad*, 70; *J.B.O.R.S.*, iv, 340; Bompas, 156.

³ Bompas, 80.

⁴ *J.B.O.R.S.*, i, 270.

It is worthy of note that it is generally believed that a tiger which has no tail is really a human being in animal form.¹

The fifth story is a different version of the common 'Ungrateful Man' motif. On this occasion neither man nor tiger breaks the faith with the other and as a result the tiger clan comes into being.

I

THE POWER OF BIKAL

A Kuruk story from Kaknar, Bastar State

A merchant was living in a certain village. He had one son. One night three thieves came to the merchant's house. That very night a tiger also came to the house to eat the merchant's son.

When they had finished their evening meal, the merchant's son said to his father, 'This evening I want to go to my father-in-law's house.' But the merchant said, 'My son, don't go now: it is night and there is Bikal.'

The tiger overheard this, and said to itself, 'Night I know, but what is this Bikal?' The tiger trembled with fear, thinking that Bikal must be stronger than he.

When the household had gone to sleep, the three thieves took many rupees from the home and tied them in a sack. But it was too heavy for them to move. So they went to the cattle-shed to find a bullock to carry it. The tiger was sitting there, and in the dark the thieves thought it was a bullock; they tied a rope round its neck and put the sack on its back. One thief went ahead and the others drove it along. The tiger thought to itself, 'This is Bikal' and it went meekly.

In the morning, the thieves saw the tiger and ran for their lives. There was a narrow gully there and the tiger got stuck between the banks. Near by there was a cowherd grazing his cattle. The tiger shouted to him to come and help. At first the cowherd would not come, but the tiger swore many oaths that it would not injure him, and at last he came. The cowherd removed the sack, and the tiger was free. The tiger said, 'Tie all this money up in a leaf-basket and take it home. If anyone asks you what it is, say it is

¹ For a general account of superstitions about tigers, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, v, 149 ff.

a load of beef which you are taking home for supper. But never take the name of Bikal; on that day I will eat you'.

So saying the tiger ran away into the jungle, and the cowherd took the rupees home in a leaf-basket. Now he was a rich man and he himself kept servants. So many days passed.

One day the cowherd's wife said, 'I want to go and see my parents.' But he said, 'Don't go now; it is night and there is Bikal.' The tiger was listening behind the house, and when it heard the name of Bikal it was very angry. It waited till they were asleep, and then crept into the house and carried off the cowherd.

The next morning the tiger said to the cowherd, 'Now I am going to eat you.' The cowherd said, 'You should eat only at the proper time. My flesh is tough now because of the cold. Wait till I am warm and tender with the sun, and eat me then.' So the tiger sat down and the cowherd lay down on a cot and slept.

In the cowherd's house, his wife was very frightened when she saw her Raja had disappeared. She took a pot with seven holes and put a lamp inside. She put anklets on her feet, and went out playing on a *dholki* and a *mandar* drum. The noise she made was this—*jig-jāg bug-bāg jhumuk jhāmak titrihi ting donha tandak latak*. So she went to find her husband.

At last she came to where her husband and the tiger were. When the tiger saw her, it asked the cowherd what this was, and he answered, 'That is Bikal.'

The tiger was frightened at that and said, 'Hide me. If you will, I won't eat you.'

Then the girl said, 'O cowherd, have you seen any tigers fit for Bikal to eat?' The cowherd said, 'I don't know if you will find one here or no.' Then she asked, 'What is that on the ground near you?' 'O that's only a pile of old clothes.' 'Then hit it with a stone', she said.

The tiger said to the cowherd, 'Hit me gently, but hit me.' So the cowherd began to hit the tiger gently on the head.

But his wife shouted, 'Hit it harder, harder.' The tiger said, 'Hit a little harder.' The cowherd hit with all his strength and the tiger died.

Those two, husband and wife, laughing and singing, went home.

2

THE LAZY BAIGA

A Gond story from Saraipani, Mandla District

There was an old Baiga who was very lazy. He and his wife went to cut the trees for their bewar. They burnt the wood and sowed the seed in the ashes, but when the time came for weeding, the Baiga sat on the edge of his clearing and yawned saying, 'If only a tiger would bite off my hands and feet I need not work any more.'

Now a tiger was living very near that clearing and heard what the Baiga said. So the next day it came to him, saying, 'Let me bite off your hands and your feet and I'll eat them for you.' The Baiga was very frightened at this and said, 'When I have eaten my rice I will be much fatter. Why not eat me then? Now I am nothing but bones and you won't enjoy me at all.' The tiger agreed and went away. When the harvest was ready the Baiga reaped the crop and ate the rice. When the time came for him to go to the bewar again, he said to his wife, 'Today that tiger will eat me.' His wife was frightened and said, 'I will save you. But first of all, make me a gun.' The Baiga made her a gun of black ebony wood and dressed her in black clothes and covered her head with a black blanket and said, 'Go and sit in the field and I will come afterwards. When the tiger says, "Now I am going to eat you", I will call out "Who's there?" and you say you are a great hunter.'

So the Baiga's wife went first and hid in the field. She was covered with black and no one could see her. The Baiga followed and the tiger came to eat him. Then the Baiga shouted: 'What are you doing, old man? Have you seen a tiger anywhere? The tiger said, 'Who is that?' The Baiga said, 'I think it is a great hunter.' The tiger began to be frightened. Then the Baiga shouted again, 'Haven't you seen a tiger anywhere, old man? I have not caught one yet and I never go home without one.' The tiger was still more frightened and said, 'Hide me somewhere.' There was a pile of chaff in the field and the Baiga hid the tiger under it. Then the Baiga came shouting, 'Find me a tiger', and the tiger cried to the Baiga, 'Push my head further in or the hunter will see me.' But the Baiga cut off its head with his axe.

The Baiga and his wife went home very pleased with themselves and the Baiga said, 'We must celebrate this. Give me a cock to eat.' But his wife said, 'Get away with you, you impotent fellow. I am going to take the cock to the bazaar and sell it and buy bangles with the money. All you will get to eat is my excreta.' The Baiga was very annoyed and went away into the jungle. There he found a hollow tree and climbed inside and made a little hole in the wood. When he went home, he said to his wife, 'I have found some young parrots. Let us keep them and teach them to talk.' 'How do they talk?', said his wife. 'They say, *To-to, to-to.*' 'What must we give them to eat?' 'They eat chicken and rice', he said and took his wife and showed her the hole in the tree, saying, 'Every day, you must put the food into this hole and they will eat it and when they are sufficiently grown we will bring them home.' The woman went home to cook the rice and chicken, and the man hid inside the hole of the tree. When the food was ready the woman brought it to the tree, and cried, 'Mithu, Mithu.' The man answered, '*To-to, to-to,*' and she put the food into the hole and he enjoyed it.

Then the old man came back from the jungle carrying a load of wood and his wife suspected nothing. Everyday she took rice and chicken and put it into the hole of the tree and the old man got quite fat through eating so much. But one day there was a bone in the food and it stuck in his throat and he coughed. His wife was frightened and climbed up and looked down into the hole of the tree and saw her husband sitting there. Then she understood the trick that had been played upon her, and they had a great quarrel.

3

THE TIGER'S VOW

A Khuntia Chokh story from Chhuri Zamindari

A Kavar boy and a Gond boy were great friends. They never worked in the fields, but were always playing and doing mischief. They used to take their bows and arrows and hide by the river to break the pots of the girls who were fetching water. They used to shoot the goats and chickens of their neighbours. At last the

villagers went to complain to their parents and the parents beat the boys, but they took no notice. So at last the villagers drove them away from their village into the jungle.

Now as they went journeying through the forest, they came to a place where there were hills on either side. The Gond boy was in front and saw a tiger blocking the path, its back towards them. He ran forward quietly and jumped on the tiger, caught hold of its ears and pushed its head down on to the ground. The Kavar boy came behind and seized its tail. 'Now what are we to do?' thought the boys. 'If we let go, the tiger will eat us.' The tiger was also wondering what had happened and said, 'Who are you?' The Gond boy answered, 'We are tiger-hunters.' The tiger was frightened and said, 'What you do when you catch tigers?' 'We yoke them to the plough,' said the boys. The tiger said, 'Are you mad that you yoke tigers to the plough?' 'No', said the Gond boy, 'when we plough with bullocks we get a rice harvest, but when we plough with tigers we get a crop of gold and silver.' This made the tiger more frightened than ever and it cried, 'If I escape, I'll give a feast to twelve tigers.'

'When you yoke your tigers to the plough,' asked the tiger again, 'how many do you use?' 'We have got one already', said the boys, 'and now with you we will have enough for one plough.' The boys had a mirror and they put this in front of the tiger and it looked in it and saw another tiger and thought they must be speaking the truth. Then it said, 'You can get gold and silver more easily than by ploughing. I have eaten many kings and princes and all their gold is in my cave. Let me go and I will give it to you.' So the boys let the tiger get up and holding its tail went with it to its cave. The cave was full of gold and silver and the tiger gave them as much as they could carry.

In fulfilment of its vow, the tiger killed a sambhar and invited twelve other tigers to a feast. As the boys were going home they met the thirteen tigers. The Gond boy climbed a tree very quickly and sat in the branches, but his friend could not reach the branch and had to cling to the trunk. The tigers gathered under the tree and a very old tiger said, 'I am tired, let us rest here.' The others said, 'Then we had better eat the sambhar at once or it may get lost.' So they divided the meat into thirteen portions and each took one. Then the old tiger said to the first tiger, 'Before we eat you

must tell us the reason for your vow.' For a long time the first tiger refused to tell them, but at last he began his story. As he was telling it, the Kavar boy fell from the tree right into the middle of the tigers. The Gond boy shouted, 'Catch that old tiger first, I want him for supper.' Hearing this, the tigers were frightened and ran away. Then the Gond boy also came down from the tree and they cooked some of the sambhar meat and had a grand supper. The next day they returned back to their village and as they were now rich the neighbours welcomed them.

4

THE TWO BROTHERS

A Muria story from Gorma, Bastar State

There were two brothers, one had a squint, one was covered with itch. Taking their axes, they went together to the jungle, and were cutting down a tree. Suddenly a tiger came by, and hid behind the tree. The squint-eyed brother caught hold of the tail and gave the half-cut tree a push so that it fell. The tail came off and the tiger ran away.

Then the brothers roasted the tail over their fire and ate it. It tasted very good and the squint-eyed brother said, 'If the tail is so good, surely the whole body will be better.' So saying they set out to find the tiger. The tiger ran for its life until it saw a woman working in her field. The tiger said, 'O woman, these brothers are chasing me, hide me and save my life.' She hid the tiger under a heap of grain.

When the brothers came they asked the woman if she had seen the tiger. 'Yes,' she said, and pointed to the place where it was hiding. At that the tiger leapt out and ran away, the brothers closely following it.

Next the tiger met a potter who was moulding clay and begged him to hide it. So the potter put it in the clay. Soon the brothers came and asked the potter if he had seen the tiger. The potter showed them where it was under the clay, and the tiger leapt out and ran away again.

But now that tiger brought twelve other tigers and the brothers climbed a tree in terror. The twelve tigers sat under the tree and

soon the squint-eyed brother fell and all ran away in fright save one whom he killed in his fall. The other brother came down and they ate it and were very pleased.

5

THE ORIGIN OF THE TIGER CLAN

A Kuruk story from Chitrakot, Bastar State

A man went to the jungle for fruit and flowers. After a time he became very thirsty. There was a well in that jungle, but as the man was trying to get some water, he fell in, and could not get out.

There he remained for eight or fifteen days. At last came a thirsty tiger searching for water. It looked down and saw the drowning man. 'Oho', said the tiger, 'here is food and water in the same place. I need go no further.'

The man heard it and cried, 'O big brother, there are some very big crabs in this well and they have bitten me all over. Don't come in or they'll bite you too. If you're thirsty, bring a rope and a pot, and I'll send water up for you.'

The tiger brought a pot and lowered it into the well. The man filled it with water; the tiger drew it up and drank. Then said the man, 'O big brother, pull me out too.'

The tiger thought, 'If I pull him out, the crabs will come up too clinging to him and I'll get bitten.' So it said, 'Men are very bad; I won't pull you out.'

The man said, 'If you'll pull me out, I'll worship you as a god.'

At that the tiger pulled the man out of the well, and the two sat down together and took an oath, the man to honour the tiger as his god, the tiger never to injure men of the tiger clan.

HUMAN CHILDREN ADOPTED BY TIGERS

THE stories in this chapter are concerned with the adoption of human children by wild animals. In the majority of them the foster-parents are *bāgh*, which is used by the aboriginals of central India not only to denote the tiger but also the leopard and the panther. Probably, however, the tiger is intended. In one interesting variant a boy is adopted by wild buffaloes instead of by tigers. The stories, which are mostly of the same general pattern, illustrate the different forms that a theme can take as it passes from mouth to mouth among the folk. The foundation of the tale seems to be—

A child is born prematurely in the forest.

Finding it is only a boy, the parents abandon him.

He is adopted by a tigress.

She gives him bows and arrows and he becomes a great hunter.

She arranges a service-marriage for him in a human house.

His place is fraudulently taken by a monkey or a barber.

He goes to live with an old widow who has a beautiful daughter.

He proves who he is by shooting straight while his supplanter misses.

He punishes his supplanter and marries both the girl to whom he was betrothed and the old widow's daughter.

This is the outline of the first story and the second is like it except that the hero has a magic axe, not a bow and arrow, to bring him success. His romance with the poor widow's daughter is more fully developed and after he has married her their children belong to the tiger clan.

Story 3 differs in that the boy does not go as a Lamsena, but the tigers capture a Raja's daughter for him, and some new adventures are included. Here it is a barber who supplants the boy and he does so after marriage and not before it. But as usual the shooting-test unmasks him and the boy regains his wife.

The Ho story of 'The Potter's Child' closely resembles that in the text.¹

Story 4 conforms to the same formula but the boy is adopted

¹ *J.B.O.R.S.*, iv, 334.

by wild buffaloes instead of by tigers.¹ Here the boy as well as the monkey who supplants him is accepted as Lamsena, for there are seven daughters in the house. The older ones admire the monkey, but the youngest loves the boy. Here again, it is by miraculous axe-cultivation that the boy gains his rights.

Story 6 is reproduced from Sterndale's *Seoni*² where a prose abstract is given of a song recorded by Dr O. Manger who was Civil Surgeon of Seoni in 1847. The story, which has been claimed as an inspiration of Kipling's *Kim*, is a mixture of the motifs of the 'Jealous Queens' and the 'Tiger Children'. The incidents wherein the tigress gets clothes and weapons for her adopted child are paralleled in the stories of this Chapter, but that of the arrogant Brahmin is peculiar to the Seoni version.³

J. H. Hutton has discussed whether there is any basis in fact for these legends of children adopted by wild animals. Unfortunately, as he points out, it is precisely with regard to such subjects as these that exact evidence with dates and places is difficult to obtain. Hutton, however, gives a great many examples mainly from India and Africa and ends by saying, 'It is with no little reluctance that I find myself unable to conclude on a note of finality. The quantity of reliable evidence is not great enough to warrant any dogmatic assertion to the effect that cases have occurred of the nurture of human infants by wild animals, though on some of the evidence this appears likely to be the case. Meanwhile it is to be feared that every year that passes makes conditions more adverse to the occurrence of specific cases for scientific investigation'.⁴

I

THE BOY, THE MONKEY AND THE TIGERS

A Muria story from Remawand, Bastar State

There lived an old couple who had no child. There was no breadwinner for them, and they lived on roots which they themselves had

¹ *J.B.O.R.S.*, i, 258; Bompas, 457.

² Sterndale, 308. See Manger, *J.A.S. Beng.*, xvi, 286 ff.

³ For a different type of tiger-adoption story, see Bompas, 226-7, and for a strange and beautiful Ho story of a boy adopted by a female sambhar, *J.B.O.R.S.*, i, 267.

⁴ J. H. Hutton, "Wolf-Children", *Folk-Lore*, li, 30.

to dig out despite their age. One day they set out together as usual on their daily task of fetching roots from the jungle, carrying with them their digging-sticks. As the old woman began digging, she gave birth to a baby boy who at once started crying. The old man, who was a few yards away, heard the cries. 'Is it a boy or a girl, my old woman?' he asked. 'It is only a boy', she said. 'O wife, if it was a girl, we would have got bride-price in due course and some liquor to drink, but it is a boy and we have no money for his marriage.' So saying, he dug a pit, put the baby inside it and covered the hole with some leaves and soft mud. When they went home the cries of the child drew a tigress to the spot. The animal at once swallowed the baby, but he came out through the vent. Amazed at this, the tigress swallowed the baby again and again, but each time he came out from behind. The tigress now realized that it was impossible to devour the baby and therefore decided to rear him up in her cave. It took great care of him until at last he grew to be a fine youth. Now the boy said to the tigress, 'O mother, fetch me a bow and arrow and an axe.' When he got these things, he went out to the jungle to hunt daily, and returned every time with a sambhar for the tigress. Now this tigress was wealthy and had a great many gold and silver ornaments. All these it gave to the youth to wear.

But the tigress was now worried: it had to find a bride for the boy. As it was in the midst of the jungle it saw a Manjhi with his beautiful daughter collecting firewood. 'This girl will do.' So thinking, it hid in a bush. As the Manjhi and his daughter were passing the bush it sprang on them and threatened to devour them if the man did not give his daughter in marriage to her son. The Manjhi said that he would first keep the boy as Lamsena. 'But I must see the boy', he said. A monkey on a near by tree heard all that passed, and as the tigress led the Manjhi to its cave to show him the boy, the monkey followed them unnoticed.

The Manjhi saw the boy, who was wearing a great many ornaments, and was very pleased and took him to his house. The boy soon settled down in his new home and went out daily with the other villagers to hunt. As before, he was successful in shooting a sambhar every time, much to the astonishment of the villagers who often got no game at all. Everyone of them was pleased and happy, and the Manjhi decided to give a feast in honour of his future

son-in-law who was such a wonderful shikari and gave them meat daily to eat.

Arrangements were going on in the Manjhi's house for the feast while the boy went out with the villagers as usual to the jungle and shot a sambhar. On that day he happened to be lagging behind the others and, seeing him alone, the monkey who had witnessed the scene between the Manjhi and the tigress came to him. The monkey claimed to be a relative of the tigress and said that he was actually going to the cave to see them both. 'However', said the monkey, 'now that I have met you I will be able to get all the news and there is no need for me to go further.' They chatted to each other for some time, and finally the monkey asked the boy to lend it his ornaments and bow and arrows for a while just to see what it would look like. The boy laughed and put the ornaments on its head and neck. The monkey took the bow and arrows in its hand and ran at great speed to the Manjhi's house. The boy followed, but he could not keep pace with it.

The feast at the Manjhi's house was ready and the monkey arrived. The Manjhi washed its legs and brought out a large pot of liquor which was distributed to the guests and they began to feast. Just then the boy arrived and when it saw him the monkey said, 'Here comes the imposter, drive him out.' All the guests rose in a body and chased him out of the village. The boy was very sad; nobody would allow him even to stand in front of their houses and if he went to his foster-mother, she would not recognize him, as he now had no ornaments, and she might devour him. While he was going along weeping, he saw a house on the far side of the village. Here lived an old widow and her only daughter who were passing their days in great poverty. The girl fell in love with the boy and begged her mother to keep him in their house as he would be a great help to them. The old woman agreed, and gave him a corner of the house, where he cooked and ate his food separately.

The next day the villagers, as usual, went to hunt with the monkey. The boy also followed them unnoticed by anyone. As the monkey had his bow and arrows he had to make a crude bow and arrow with his own hands. After a while a sambhar came from the bushes, but the monkey missed its aim and the sambhar raced in the direction of the boy, who made no mistake despite his crude weapon. He ran to the dead sambhar, cut off half its ears, half the horns,

half the tail and one leg, and hid in a bush. The party of villagers happened to pass by the spot where the dead sambhar was lying and thinking it to be the very animal at which the monkey had aimed carried it to the village. 'Some wild animal has eaten part of it', they said. At sunset the boy came out of his hiding-place and went home. He gave a portion of the meat to the old woman and her daughter and cooked the rest for himself. This went on for a number of days. The old widow was happy that they were getting meat daily and decided to give her daughter in marriage to the boy. The Manjhi began to wonder what it was that was eating a portion of the sambhar every day. He, therefore, decided to see for himself, and next day followed the villagers to the jungle and hid in a bush.

The widow, on her part, was making arrangements for her daughter's marriage with the boy. The boy as usual went behind the villagers, unaware of the fact that the Manjhi was keeping watch.

As on previous days, the sambhar made its appearance, the monkey missed and the boy shot it. As he was cutting it up, the Manjhi rushed from his hiding-place and seized the boy, accusing him of stealing the meat. 'First bring me your son-in-law's ornaments and clothes. I will wear them and then you will know everything', said the boy. The Manjhi brought them, and the boy dressed himself and took his bow and arrow in his hand. 'Now', said he, 'who is your son-in-law, that monkey or I?' They recognized the boy and the Manjhi in rage started belabouring the monkey. 'No', said the boy, 'you must not beat it here, we must take it to the village.' Holding it by the ear, the boy dragged it to the village and took it from house to house saying, 'Here's the Manjhi's son-in-law', kicking it each time. Finally he planted a great pole in the centre of the village and tied it at the top of it, where it was teased by the children.

The Manjhi now asked the boy to marry his daughter, but the boy said that he would first marry the widow's daughter and then his. The Manjhi agreed and the boy lived happily with his two wives.

2

THE TIGER'S CHILD

A Raja-Muria story from Mandar, Bastar State

An old man and woman lived in a certain village. The old woman was pregnant. They were very poor and daily went to work for the neighbours and so got their living. One day they went to the jungle to dig for roots and as they were digging the woman gave birth to a son. The man said, 'We cannot get enough food for ourselves, how can we feed this child? We must leave the child here in the jungle.' So saying, they left the child there and went home.

The boy lay weeping and soon a tigress heard the noise and came and ate him. But at once the creature excreted him and he lay again on the ground weeping. So now the tigress decided to keep the child. It hid by the roadside, and soon a Mahara came by with a load of cloth to sell in the bazaar. The tigress caught the Mahara, saying, 'Give me all your cloth or I'll eat you.' The Mahara gave the tigress the cloth and ran away. The tigress wrapped the child in the cloth and took him home. It fed the child with its own milk. So the boy grew up.

When the boy was old enough, he said, 'Give me an axe and a bow and arrow.' So the tigress caught a Lohar and said, 'Make me an axe and a bow and arrow of iron; if you don't, I'll eat you.' The Lohar said, 'I swear that I will do what you ask.' After a few days he brought the axe and bow and arrows and the tigress gave them to the boy. Every day the boy used to go out hunting and brought the spoils home for the tiger and tigress.

One day they called the boy and said, 'Son, how can you go on living with us. Go and be a Lamsena somewhere.' They gave him cloth and gold and silver and sent him to the house of the Manjhi in the nearest village. As he was going there he met a monkey which attacked him and took away his things and itself put on the clothes and gold and silver ornaments, and went instead to the Majhi's house as Lamsena.

A few scraps of cloth were lying about torn in the struggle. The boy picked them up and knotted them twelve times and dressed him-

self, taking the name of Bara-gathiya-lingatiya, and went to the same village.

The monkey had arrived at the Manjhi's house and was already calling them Mama, Phua, Didi and Bhato, and had made them all his relatives. It said to the Manjhi, 'There are flowers in your house: I want to wear one of the flowers.' The Manjhi said, 'Well, you may stay with us.' The monkey told the villagers, 'If a fellow called Bara-gathiya-lingatiya comes here, turn him out; otherwise I'll turn all of you out.'

But the boy went to an old woman's house; there was a beautiful young girl there. The boy stayed there two or four days, and then he said, 'O old mother, I'm going now.' But the old woman said, 'Son, don't go. I have a daughter, marry her.' The boy was pleased and remained in the house.

One day the villagers went to cut dippa and the boy said to the girl, 'Give me an axe; I want to go and cut dippa also.' The girl gave him an axe, and the boy went after the other villagers.

Now there was magic in that axe, and it said to the boy, 'O boy, taking Mahapurub's name cut a tree.' The boy did so, and at once for twelve twelve twenty-four kos all the trees were cut and the fields were ready; fire broke out among the trees and the clearing was prepared. When the time came for sowing, all the pigs from the jungle came and dug up the ground and the boy sowed the rice-seed. This done, the boy went home.

After some days, the boy and the girl went together to watch the fields and found the rice ready. After it had been reaped the boy went to see the tiger and tigress and said, 'O mother and father, I can't get any men to make my rice ready nor any carts to carry it to market; get me men and carts.'

The tiger and tigress went to the Raja's city and began to eat the people who lived there. Then the Raja called his magicians to find out what was the matter, and the god answered that, 'The tiger and tigress have a son called Bara-gathiya-lingatiya and he cut dippa of twelve twelve twenty-four kos and sowed rice. He wants men to thresh and winnow and carts to carry it away. Send men to help him and the tigers will kill no more.' The Raja sent many men and carts and chaprasis, and many rupees to his sepoys for the feeding of the tigers with goats and chickens. The Raja's men

threshed and winnowed the grain, loaded it onto the carts and took it to the boy's house.

The Raja sent many rupees to the boy, and with this wealth he was married to the girl. The old woman invited two or four Rajas to the wedding. After the wedding, the boy asked the tiger and tigress to come, and invited the villagers to come and see them. He asked the monkey also.

Then the boy told them how he had been coming to the Manjhi's house as Lamsena, and how the monkey had stolen everything from him on the way. He said to the monkey, 'Are you going to give me back my things or no?' The monkey answered, 'Where did you get all this? It's not your father's'. The tiger was sitting quietly listening, but when it heard this it jumped up and seized the monkey and ate it.

Then the boy gave the tiger and tigress a goat for supper and feasted the whole village on goat and chicken, rice and liquor. Then said the tiger and tigress, 'Now my son we are going away. You two live happily. If ever there is any trouble, take our name and we will come and help you. Never will we hurt you and yours.'

From that day the boy and his children have worshipped the tiger as their god, and thus they belong to the Bagh-bas (the tiger clan).

3

THE TIGER BOY

A Baiga story from Bohi, Pandaria Zamindari.

A Baigin was pregnant with her first child. The husband said: 'How I hope that the child will be a girl! For if there is a girl she will bring us food and money; but if it is a boy I will bury it alive.' His wife said, 'Yes, that is what we will do.'

When her time came, the mother gave birth to a son, and after a few days the Baiga took him to bury in the jungle. But a tigress watched from behind a bush and when the Baiga had gone away, it dug the child up and fed him with its own milk. The tigress had two cubs of its own who played with the baby boy. When the boy grew up, the tigress said, 'I must find you a wife.' The boy said, 'Mother, you must marry me, it is true; but we will have many

visitors and we should first of all make arrangements for feeding them.' The tigress said, 'What am I to do?' 'I must have as many bows and arrows as twenty-four men can carry, and then I will prepare everything for the feast.'

The tigress went to the city of the Agaria and caught one of them. 'I am going to eat you,' it said. 'Spare me,' said the blacksmith, 'and I will give you anything you want.' 'Within eight days', said the tigress, 'you must send me as many bows and arrows as twenty-four men can carry.' The Agaria kept his promise and within eight days twenty-four men came to the tigress's house carrying their loads of bows and arrows. The boy took them and went out to hunt. When he had killed enough, the tigress went to find him a wife.

Now a Raja was bringing his daughter-in-law home in a litter at the conclusion of her marriage. The Raja and his son were riding on ahead. The tigress sprang upon the men who were carrying the litter and killed them and carried away the girl. She invited all the tigers, leopards, bears and elephants in the jungle to the marriage. The bride and bridegroom sat in the marriage-booth and the animals came to greet them. The boy was frightened and said, 'Don't let the animals kiss us, they should only put the tika mark on our foreheads.' But an old tiger said, 'The tika is not enough, I must greet them properly.' This tiger touched the boy's chin with its paw and caught his beard with its claws and pulled it out. But the bride's finger was full of magic and when she touched the beard it was healed. After the marriage the tigress gave them a great feast and sent the visitors home. But on the way back the tigers and leopards said to one another, 'We've had a great feast but we've not eaten the bride and bridegroom.' So they hid themselves by the roadside and waited.

When the marriage ceremonies were finished, the husband and wife said to the tigress, 'Mother, we are going home to live among men but we will never forget you and we will always send you presents.' The boy took his bows and arrows and they went on their way. Presently, the tigers and leopards surrounded them but they climbed a tree and sat in the branches. The animals gathered at the bottom of the tree and climbed on each other's backs and nearly reached them. The boy said to his wife, 'Hold my hair tight with one hand and catch hold of a branch with the other.' He

took his bow and arrow and with one mighty shot killed all the animals.

They went on their way and presently they met a barber. The boy got him to cut off all his hair. The girl said, 'I will give you a gold coin in payment,' and she went on to her house to get it. The barber tried to kill the boy while he was cutting his hair, but the boy escaped and hid in the house of a blacksmith. The barber dressed himself in the boy's clothes and took his shape. But when he went home the girl said, 'Where are your bows and arrows?' The barber said, 'I didn't feel well and couldn't carry them.' But the girl knew that this was not really her husband and she went to her father, the Raja, and said, 'If it is really my husband he will kill all the tigers in your jungle'. So they took the barber out and put a bow and arrow in his hand, but when the tigers came he missed them and they sprang upon him and killed him. Then the Raja brought the boy's bow and proclaimed that whoever could draw it would be accepted as his daughter's husband. Many came but were unable to bend it until at last the boy came from the blacksmith's house and he drew the bow and the Raja gave him half his kingdom and his daughter.

4

THE BOY WHO PLAYED MARBLES

A Muria story from Chandabera, Bastar State

There were two boys in a city. No one cared for them. They lived by grazing goats. Someone gave them jawa to drink, and so drinking jawa like this twelve years and thirteen ages passed. Then the younger boy said to his brother, 'O brother, the village boys are playing marbles among the roots of the banyan tree. Get marbles for me and I too will play. Get me some bread also and holding it I will play with them. For I too like playing.' Now all the village boys were playing under one tree, but they would not allow this boy to play. What did he do? He played at a distance from that tree. As he was playing, his marble went twelve-twelve kos round to a place where there was no village near at hand. There his marble went. There was nothing there but jungle and mountain. In that great forest there was no sound of bird, no cry of usi bird, there was no

crow there. The old bear said, 'Hay' and the dry trees made a sound like an axe. In such a hill the boy's marble had gone under the roots of the banyan tree.

Among the roots of that banyan tree the wild buffaloes had their resting-place. A buffalo blind of one eye used to watch the buffalo-calves. Its horn was twelve-twelve cubits long. When the boy saw that buffalo he climbed to the top of the banyan tree. The blind buffalo could not see him, but it found a man's smell in its nose. So then it looked up and up to see whence that man's smell came. At evening time the buffaloes who had gone out to graze returned. It was night and none could see the boy. When morning dawned all the buffaloes looked up and up, but could not see him. Only that very buffalo with one eye saw him. Now let us leave these doings for a little while and let us hear what has happened to the elder brother.

The elder brother said to himself, 'There is no clue to what has happened to my younger brother,' and he spent his days weeping and grazing his goats. Now let us leave the elder brother for a little while and let us hear about the buffalo.

That buffalo said to the boy, 'O boy, come down'. The boy said, 'No, I cannot come down, you will eat me,' but when the buffaloes forced him the boy came down to the ground. Then the buffaloes said, 'No, brother, stay here and guard our camp and our calves. We will care for you and we will arrange your marriage'. The boy had no wearing-cloth and he said to the buffaloes, 'No, I have no wearing-cloth,' but the buffaloes said, 'We will arrange that.'

Next day a Ganda came along that way as he went to market carrying cloth on his shoulder. When the buffaloes saw that Ganda, they snorted loudly and made him run away. He threw down his clothes and climbed up a tree. The buffalo picked up the clothes with his horns and took them away for the boy. 'O boy, I have brought clothes for you, wear them.' Then the boy wore those clothes. Every morning that boy milked the buffalo's milk in a leaf-cup and drank it, and all day he guarded the calves. In the evening, when the buffaloes returned to their sleeping-place, they again gave the boy milk if he was hungry. One day at the time of taking gruel in the middle of the day a potter came by carrying a pot to sell and the boy seeing the potter asked him for a pot. 'If you give me a pot, tomorrow I will give you milk.' He gave him a pot. In the

evening when the buffaloes returned to their sleeping-place they saw the pot and said to the boy, 'O boy, where did you buy this pot?' 'A potter was bringing pots from place to place and from him I bought it, saying that I would give him milk.' After that the boy milked the milk into the pot and drank it. Then the buffaloes said to the boy, 'Now you may go anywhere as Lamsena'. The boy said, 'Where should I go?' The buffaloes said, 'O boy, go as Lamsena to the Gaita in Berelpur city. He has seven daughters. You may go anywhere else you like, don't worry. Here's much wealth for you. At the time of marriage our ancestors will come and see you for a little while when you call us. Then we will come. Anything you need also we will give.'

Then the boy was ready to go as Lamsena to this Berelpur city. As he went he bathed in the water of a tank. There was a monkey there. That monkey said to the boy, 'O boy, where are you going?' and the boy said, 'I am going to be Lamsena in the Gaita's house in Berelpur city.' At the time of bathing the boy was naked and he had put his clothes on the ground and so was bathing. The monkey put on the boy's coat and went ahead of him to be Lamsena in the Gaita's house. The boy came out of the water and followed the monkey asking for his clothes. Seeing some one on the way, the monkey said, 'I am going to be the Gaita's Lamsena.' When the boy also met the man he asked him for a cloth to wear. The man said, 'Where are you going naked?' The boy replied, 'I am going to be a Lamsena'. The man then gave him a cloth and the boy put it on and went after the monkey. The monkey looked like a man. The monkey going on ahead arrived at the Gaita's house first and did johar. He also saluted his mother-in-law with johar. When the seven young girls saw the monkey, being shy they went inside the house. Then the boy arrived and sat down silent as a digging-stick. No one looked at him but the Gaita kept both the monkey and the boy as Lamsena. Four days afterwards, what does this monkey say? It says, 'This boy is a Ganda, give him his jawa from above.' So from the next day they gave the boy his jawa from above. All the big girls gave jawa to the monkey and the smallest girl gave jawa to the boy.

One day the mother-in-law said to the monkey, 'O son-in-law, go to cut dippa'. The monkey said that he was going to cut the dippa, but he spent his time busily eating tendu and siari. It cut

no dippa. Every day it did this but one day the boy asked for an axe to cut dippa and went out to the work. When he gave one blow to the tree, a hundred trees were felled and with two or three blows he cut a whole village-boundary-full of dippa. Next day, he went to cut the branches off. At one time the branches of one hundred trees were cut. As many trees as he had felled had their branches cut off. After the boy came home the monkey also came and sat down sighing *hus ariyo*. The next day the boy set fire to his dippa. When he pushed the fire at one time, he pushed twelve cubits. In one day the whole dippa was finished.

Now the boy's little girl went hiding from the house behind the boy to see the dippa and she watched him pushing the fire and said, 'I will live my life for him, for this is a good cultivator and a hard worker. That monkey does no work in his clearing but only eats *tendu* and *siari*'. Then that little girl thought in her mind, 'He has burnt such a big clearing, where will he get the seed to sow? We are giving him his gruel but his father-in-law won't see it and his mother-in-law won't like it'. Then every day when this girl husked the rice, she hid half a seer of it and kept it in a pot in the forest. When sowing time came the boy wondered where he would get the seed to sow and spoke to himself in such a way. This time the girl heard him from her hiding-place and said, 'O brother, what do you think I did for you? I made a share of rice and hid it. Don't worry.' The boy then asked, 'O girl, have you really kept a share for me?' The girl said, 'Come, and I will show you the seed'. He went and she showed him. At that the boy, without anyone in the house knowing, begged for a pair of bullocks from the village and he tilled his land. He took three kuro of rice to the clearing and sowed it in an area as big as a village boundary, but no one knew except the girl. There was no such clearing so thick with rice, so full of rice it was. When the rice sprouted, the girl went to see it. When she saw it, she was pleased. Previously father-in-law and mother-in-law had not given the boy a stomach-full of gruel. Now the boy seeing the rice, put it in its place. Then the girl seeing him also did this with him in that place. After that both did the reaping and the threshing. For eight days the girl and boy were there and did not come to the house. So they finished all the work. Then the boy went to the father-in-law and said, O father-in-law, get ready the carts from the whole village to bring the bundles of rice from my

field'. When the father-in-law heard this he went to see and found the rice piled up like a small hill. When he came back he asked the monkey, 'How much rice have you got and how many bundles have you made? Here so much remains even after the bundles have been carried in for fifteen days'. When all the bundles were brought, then the boy's marriage began. The supplies for the marriage were made ready. When the Lagir time came, the boy stood with folded hands and said to his ancestors, 'Today is the marriage; come and see,' and he said to the village people, 'I am not going to live in a small house'. After a little while all the forest buffaloes came. On the way they knocked down small trees and little houses. When the villagers saw the buffaloes they were frightened and said, 'What a big man this boy is!' Then his father-in-law and his mother-in-law accepted him. When the marriage was finished, the father-in-law said to the boy, 'Who are your relatives?' The boy said, 'I have none, but I have a brother'. 'Then go and bring your brother.' One of the buffaloes said, 'Sit on me, you cannot walk, I will take you and bring him back with you'. So they went there and searched for the brother but when they found him the elder could not recognize the younger brother. For twelve years had passed. But when the buffalo met him, it said, 'Both of you sit on me and I will take you back.' They sat and he brought them to the house and there the marriage was finished. When she saw him, the biggest girl said, 'I will live with him'. The little girl said, 'You wanted the monkey, why do you want him now?' But the big girl said, 'No, I will drive out this monkey'. She took the pestle and beat the monkey till it ran away. The girls were shared between the brothers. Having made a house, they ate.

5

THE COW AND THE TIGRESS

A Gond story from Bondar, Mandla District

An old Gond couple had many cows. The cows gave so much dung that they grew weary of throwing it away. One day the old woman said she had a very bad headache and asked her husband to kill the biggest of the cows and put its liver on her forehead. The

husband took the cow out into the jungle and killed a goat instead. He brought the goat's liver home to cure his wife's headache.

☞ The cow wandered away into the jungle and made friends with a tigress. They lived together for some time and presently each gave birth to a human son. Gradually the two boys grew up and, when they were big enough, they asked their mothers to let them go hunting. But the cow-boy said to the tiger-boy: 'I'm afraid that your mother will eat mine', and when he got an opportunity he killed the tigress.

Then they went away to a city. In that city there was a Dano who was eating the inhabitants one by one. The Raja had an unmarried daughter. He declared: 'Whoever brings me the ears and tail of this Dano may marry my daughter.' One night the boys took the place of the Dano's victim and killed it, cutting off its ears and tail. They took these things to the Raja who gave his daughter to the cow-boy.

Then they went to find a wife for the tiger-boy. They came to a river where there was a great fish which was eating everybody who went to fetch water. The Raja of that place also had a daughter and had promised her to whoever could kill the fish. The boys jumped into the river and fought with the fish and killed it and so the tiger-boy also got a wife. Then they went home to the jungle and found the cow-mother. She took them to the old people who had tried to kill her and the boys became landlords of that village and employed the old man and his wife for two pice a day.

6

THE SONG OF SANDSUMJEE

A Gond story from the Seoni District

Sandsumjee married six wives, but had no heir, so he married a seventh and departed on a journey; during his absence, after his relatives had sacrificed to a god, she bore a son Singbaba. The 'small wife was sleeping, the other six were there'; so they took the babe and threw it into the buffalo's stable, placing a puppy by his side, and said, 'Lo! a puppy is born'.

But the buffaloes took care of Singbaba, and poured milk into his mouth.

When the six wives went to look for him, they found Singbaba playing.

Thence they took him and threw him to the cows, but the cows said, 'Let no one hurt him', and poured milk into his mouth. So when the six wives went to look again whether he was alive or dead, lo! Singbaba was playing.

Thence they took him and threw him into a well, but on the third day when they went to enquire, they found Singbaba still playing. So they took him and threw him on the tigers' path as the tigers were coming, and they heard his cries as they left him. But the tigress felt compassion and said, 'It is my child', so she took him to her den, and having weaned her cubs fed Singbaba with milk, and so he grew up with the cubs. To her one day Singbaba said, 'I am naked; I want clothes.' So the tigress went and sat by the market road till muslin and cloth makers came along; on seeing her run at them they dropped their bundles and fled, which she took up and brought to Singbaba, who clothed himself and kissed her feet.

Another day he said, 'Give me a bow.' She again went and waited till a sepoy armed with a bow passed by. She roared and rushed at him, on which he dropped the bow and fled, and she picked it up and brought it to Singbaba, who shot birds with it for his little tiger brothers.

In the meantime, Sandsumjee returned home and said, 'Is any one inspired? Has God entered into any one? If so, let him arise.'

Then Singbaba received inspiration, and accompanied by his big and little brothers went. In the midst of the assembly was a Brahmin. Him Singbaba required to get up; he refused, whereupon the big brother (tiger) got angry and did eat him up. All asked Singbaba, 'Who are you?'

'Ask the buffaloes', he replied, telling his little brother to go and call his mother. She came, and the three species were assembled before the people.

'Question them', said Singbaba. So they asked, 'Who is he?' First the buffaloes answered, 'Sandsumjee's son', and they told his story.

Then the cows told how he stayed with them two days, and then was thrown into the well; from thence they knew not where he went.

'Ask my mother', said Singbaba.

So the tigress told how she weaned her cubs and nourished him,

on which all embraced her feet and established her as a god, giving her the six wicked wives. So Singbaba became illustrious, and the tigress was worshipped.

*'Sandsumjee Babana id saka aud,
Of Sandsumjee Baba this song is,
Bhirri bans bhirri-ta saka aud,
Of Bhirri bamboo jungle Bhirri this song is.'*

THE BEAST MARRIAGE

STORIES of a beast marriage, the physical difficulties of which are realistically imagined, are common among the Baiga and I have given several in my book on that tribe. In the present collection we have a dog-bride in Chap. XVII and a snake-bride in Chap. XXII. In Bastar it is generally the monkey who is chosen as the husband of a human partner. This tale with small variations is frequently repeated. I will give one example from the Bison-horn Maria country and for comparison reprint, with his permission, one of W. V. Grigson's tales recorded from the Hill Maria at Hikul.¹ It will be noticed that in neither of these stories is there any reference to the dispareunia which the Baiga humorist delights to emphasize.

I

A Maria story from Bara Harmamunda

A Maria girl went one day to the jungle to collect tendu fruit for sale in the bazaar. She saw a monkey on one of the tendu trees and asked it to throw the fruit down to her. 'What will you give me, if I do?' said the monkey. 'I will give you two pice', said the girl. 'I have no wife, I have no children, what should I do with the money?' 'Then I will give you rice.' 'But I have no children, what should I do with the rice?' 'Then I will give you cloth', said the girl, and the monkey again replied 'No wife, I have no children, and what should I do with the cloth?' 'Then I will have to give you—', said the girl. 'That is what I will give you', replied the monkey and when she had promised, it threw the fruit down to her and she filled her basket and went home.

When her brother's wives saw such a lot of fruit, they asked how she had managed to collect so much in such a short time. 'We ourselves have been all day and have only got a little fruit. I went early in the morning and got the fruit before the time to eat it.'

¹ Grigson, 325.

So the next day her brother's wives got up at cock-crow and went very early to the jungle but they found no more fruit than on the previous day and returned home disappointed. Later in the morning the girl went to the same tree. There was her monkey in the branches. It threw down a lot of fruit, made the girl fulfil her promise and sent her home with her basket full. After that she used to visit the monkey every day and it finally persuaded her to go with it to its house.

When the girl failed to return home her two brothers went to look for her but there was no news of her. Some time later her two brothers went to hunt in the jungle not far from the monkey's house. They had a dog with them but during the hunt it got lost and found its way to the monkey's house. The girl recognized it, gave it food and sent it home.

After that whenever the brothers went out to shoot, the dog used to run away and get fed by the girl in the monkey's house. When the brothers saw that every day the dog returned home content with a full belly, they were puzzled as to what had happened and, determined to discover the secret, the next time they went to hunt they tied round the dog's neck a bag of ash with a small hole in the bottom. The dog escaped as usual in the middle of the hunt but now the brothers were able to follow its tracks by the ash that dropped from the bag and thus the dog led them to their sister.

She received them and gave them good food and a little money. The monkey was away in the forest and when the brothers asked where her husband was she said that he was out working in the dippa clearing. Now the monkey was very rich and the girl was able to give better food to her brothers than they ever got at home. So they began visiting their sister daily but after some time they insisted on seeing her husband. At last the girl called the monkey and when they saw it the brothers became very angry and demanded bride-price. The monkey gave them a large sum of money and they went away satisfied.

After a year the girl gave birth to a baby monkey. The brothers now plotted to get hold of the monkey's wealth, so they invited their sister to come to their house with her husband and the baby. The girl agreed on condition that they tied the dog safely inside the house for she was afraid that it might kill her husband. They promised to do so and in due time the monkey with its wife and child

after he had been posted he saw the monkey come and start eating the kutki. The watchman told the other boys, and next day all combined to kill the monkey; they gave a little of its flesh to the old man also, and he ate it.

When evening came but the monkey did not come home, its father-in-law searched for him, and three or four days later learnt how the boys had killed him. In a rage he told the boys that he intended to report their action to the authorities. They were frightened and begged him not to do this, promising that one of them should come and serve him for his daughter's hand. Then the old man was satisfied. One of the boys came to serve him to win his daughter's hand, and ultimately he married the servitor to his daughter, and the boy and girl made a house and lived there together.

SNAKE STORIES

IN the stories of this Chapter there are many interesting themes. The power, beauty and terror of snakes has affected the Hindu from the earliest times nor has the Indian aboriginal been any less susceptible. The literature of snake-worship and serpent-lore is so extensive that it is impossible even to summarize it here. Unfortunately serpent-worship 'fell years ago into the hands of speculative writers, who mixed it up with occult philosophies, Druidical mysteries, and that portentous nonsense called the "Arkite Symbolism", till now sober students hear the very name of Ophiolatry with a shiver. Yet it is in itself a rational and instructive subject of enquiry, especially notable for its width of range in mythology and religion.'²

The aboriginals of central India have traditions associating the snake with several of their tribal rulers; the conventional story is that the young Raja is found protected by a cobra's hood. In at least one tradition Lingo, the Gond hero, and his brothers, were born of a cobra. The Barai, the betel-growers of the Central Provinces, have a special veneration for this splendid reptile, and their great festival is Nag Panchmi. Formerly, they say, there was no betel-vine on earth. But when the five Pandava brothers celebrated the great horse-sacrifice after their victory at Hastinapur, they wanted betel and sent messengers to Basuki, queen of the serpents, who cut off the top joint of her little finger and gave it to the messengers. When this was sown on earth, the betel vine grew up—and this is why the vine has no blossoms or seeds, but the joints of the creepers are cut off and sown, when they sprout afresh, and the vine is called Nagbel or serpent-creeper. Although many cobras frequent the betel gardens on account of their moist coolness and shade, the Barai claim that they are never bitten by them.³ The Agarwala Bania also have a legend of descent from a Naga or snake princess. In Bihar they say, 'Our mother's house is of the race of the snake.'⁴

In many tribes there is a snake clan, whose members be-

¹ See J. P. Vogel, *Indian Serpent Lore* (London, 1926).

² Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 239.

³ Russell and Hiralal, ii, 1956.

⁴ Risley, 5.

lieve they have a special affinity with snakes, do not kill or eat them and think they are immune from their attack. Other tribesmen, however, eat snakes freely and extract the oil from their bodies.

In this book the attitude to the snake varies considerably. In some stories we have grateful snakes which are useful to mankind, provide the hero with treasure and assistance, and protect him against his enemies. Then we have dangerous and treacherous snakes; some of them prey on defenceless birds and are killed by the hero, others in heartless ingratitude enter the body of their benefactor and cause it to waste away. Other snakes live permanently inside a woman's body and issue forth to bite and kill her lovers.

There are traditions of snake husbands who are either divine beings in snake form or simply straightforward phallic symbols. Finally we have the snake as totem of a clan.

The first two stories in this Chapter are about girls who marry snakes. The theme is not developed nor are the physical difficulties of so strange a conjugation emphasized. The stories have clearly been suggested by the phallic nature of the snake-symbol.¹ It is very curious that in both stories as well as in the parallels which I will give, we have the associations—a girl married to a snake, a girl going into a tank and drowning there, and a girl's relations with her brothers. In a Santal tale recorded by Campbell there are seven brothers who make a tank to perpetuate their names, but no water comes from it and they are advised that if they offer their sister as a sacrifice to the spirit of the tank, it will be filled. They therefore tell her to fetch water from the tank. Carrying her pitcher she goes down into it, and as she goes the water begins to flow, gradually filling it up until she is drowned.² A Baiga story describes how in Garha Haveli there was once a Baiga Raja. He had a great tank made, but there was no water in it. One day two Gond girls went to get water to drink and when they could not find any, the elder girl said to her little sister, 'Give me that ring on your finger, and we'll throw it in the tank and then there'll be plenty to drink.' They threw it in the tank and a lot of water sprang up and they were able to drink. The elder sister wanted to go home, but the little girl said, 'I want my ring', and she began to cry. The big girl went into the tank to get the ring. She went up to her knees, and cried out,

¹ On the phallic character of the snake-symbol in India, see Rivett-Carnac, 17-30.

² Campbell, 52.

'I have gone up to my knees, but I haven't found the ring.' But the little girl wept and cried, 'Bring it, bring it to me.' Then she went further and she cried, 'I am up to my chin in the water, but I've not found the ring.' But still the child cried, so the girl went right under the water and called out, 'Is it me you love or the ring?' But the child only cried, 'I want my ring.' At last the girl found it, and threw it on to the bank, but she herself was drowned.¹

The association of snakes with tanks is not very obvious but frequently occurs in the folk-tales. In a Ho story a little boy commits suicide by standing in the dry bed of a tank and singing to the Naga and its wife begging them to take him. As he sings the water gushes up and gradually rises until he is drowned.² In another Ho tale a boy who eats the eggs of a hill-serpent turns into a snake and is carried by his sister to a tank in the jungle. Here we have again the curious link of brother and sister, snake and tank.³

The offering of human sacrifice to cause water to flow in a dry tank has been recorded from various parts of India.⁴ Human sacrifices were offered by the Khasi to their snake deity Thlen.⁵

Stories 3, 4 and 5 are about snakes in the human body. The motif of the princes from whose nostrils two snakes issue and kill her husband is paralleled in the Santal story of Kora who marries a princess with this regrettable defect.⁶ In this case the snakes are killed by a faithful crab. This tale connects distantly with the cycle of the Poison Maid.⁷

Story 4, of the Ungrateful Snake, is full of echoes. On one side it is connected with the motif of 'Ungrateful Animals' and the 'Show Me How' motif. In a Santal story⁸ and a Ho story⁹ we also have the incident of the snake saved by a Raja from a forest fire. In the Santal story the snake after being saved wishes to kill the prince and they go from place to place to get the matter arbitrated. Finally the snake is foolish enough to teach the prince's wife an incantation which will turn anyone to ashes: it tells her to try and see if it is truly powerful or no, and she tries it on the snake itself and kills it. In the Ho

¹ *The Baiga*, 494.

² *J.B.O.R.S.*, i, 260.

³ *Ibid.*, 262.

⁴ Cf. *J.B.O.R.S.*, xii, 155; *North Indian Notes and Queries*, v, 209.

⁵ See notes by S. C. Mitra in *J. Anth. Soc. Bom.*, xiii, 192-198; *Man in India*, xii, 184-187; Gurdon, *The Khasis*, 92-94.

⁶ Bompas, 276, and Grignard, 136.

⁷ For a similar incident, see Day, 100; Knowles, 32; and Parker, iii, 332, though in the Ceylon tale the snake does not come from the girl's body.

⁸ Bompas, 150.

⁹ *J.B.O.R.S.*, iv, 326.

tale the snake after being rescued from the fire enters an open bag and then threatens to kill its benefactor. The matter is referred to arbitration until at last a clever fox asks the snake to show how it got into the bag, whereupon it fastens it up and the man is saved. This motif, however, is not developed in the story in the text. Here the snake is saved from the fire by being cooled in the Raja's belly, but it then is sufficiently ungrateful to remain there in spite of the fact that its presence means the Raja's ultimate death. The Raja is finally saved by his wife who overhears the conversation between two snakes, the one who was living in the belly of her husband and another who has come from an ant-hill near their house. We thus have our story related to the 'Overhearing' instead of the 'Show Me How' motif. This indeed is what happens in the *Katha Sarit Sagara*, though here it is a centipede that gets into the Raja's ear and in course of time given birth to many others inside his head. Kirtisena overhears a Rakshasi telling her children how the Raja may be healed. She goes to the king and saves his life.¹ There is a similar tale in Frere's *Old Deccan Days*. The Raja in the seventh story of this collection suffers agony owing to a cobra which has become lodged in his throat and cannot be extracted. His bride overhears two cobras discussing how he could be cured and following their advice saves her husband's life. She, like the girl in the text, also overhears the fact that a treasure is buried in the snake's ant-hill. In both cases husband and wife become rich and are consoled for their past suffering.²

Story 6 is included here because of the ending with its totemic reference. The story itself is little more than a string of familiar themes strung together. In the earlier part of the tale is emboxed the common motif of buying wisdom from a Bairagi. A Santal tale describes how a prince gives a man his only three gold coins for three bits of advice which are, first, not to sit without moving the stool or mat offered him; second, not to bathe where others bathe; third, to act according to the opinion of the majority and the fourth, which is given free, to restrain his anger, hear an explanation and wait well before acting. The first bit of wisdom saves the prince from being dropped

¹ Penzer, iii, 49 ff.

² Frere, 121. A Mirzapur tale describes how a wicked queen had a tiny snake put in her step-daughter's goblet. The girl swallowed the snake which then used to come out of her mouth and steal the milk until her brother killed it. *North Indian Notes and Queries*, v, 213.

into a well; the second preserves his purse left behind when bathing; the third gets him money from the waist-cloth of a corpse, and the fourth prevents him from misjudging his wife.¹

The South Indian version is similarly based on four maxims, which was all the treasure which an old merchant bequeathed to his son. In this case they were—travel not without a living assistant; sleep not in an inn; neglect not what four or five people say; be not always open towards your wife.² It is obvious that such maxims hold promise of high adventure.

I

THE TALE OF DASMOTIN KANIYA

A Gond story from Markam Tola, Mandla District

There were ten brothers and one sister whose name was Dasmotin Kaniya. The brothers would never allow Dasmotin to go out of her house, nor do any work, for the work of the house was done by the ten wives.

Every day the ten brothers went out to hunt. One day, after they had gone to the forest, the ten wives lay down. One said, 'My eyes are hurting.' One said, 'I have a headache.' A third said, 'My hands and feet are aching.' Another said, 'I've got a stomach-ache.' So all ten lay down to rest.

Then Dasmotin Kaniya first swept the ten courtyards, then she cleaned the ten houses, then she cleared out the dung from the ten cow-sheds. After that she went for water for the ten water-stands.

But as the girl was going to the tank for water, Nang Kuar saw her and filled his mouth with all the water that was left in the tank.

When the ten brothers came back from hunting and saw that all the water in the tank was dried up, they knew that Dasmotin had been for water. They went to the house and each abused his wife, saying, 'Why did you send Dasmotin for water?' But Dasmotin said, 'They were ill, and so I went for water instead.'

The eldest brother went to the bank of the pond and stood on the wall and cried,

'Cobra, O cobra, quickly bring up the water,
Sendriman the young girl cobra stands upon the wall.'

¹ Bompas, 53.

² Cf. Swynnerton, 213; Knowles, 32; Parker, iii, 136.

The cobra heard it, and so did another cobra that lived near by, and sang,

‘Cobra, O cobra, do not bring up the clear water,
Sendriman the young girl cobra is at home in her house.’

The eldest brother went away and the second brother came to the tank, and sang,

‘Cobra, O cobra, bring up the clear water,
Sendriman the young girl cobra stands on the wall.’

And the cobra answered,

‘Cobra, O cobra, do not bring up the clear water,
Sendriman the young girl cobra is at home in her house.’

In this way each of the ten brothers came to the wall and sang, and were answered by the cobra. Then the ten brothers’ wives came and they too sang and were answered. At last Dasmotin Kaniya came and stood by the tank and sang,

‘Cobra, O cobra, bring up the clear water,
Sendriman the young girl cobra stands on the wall.’

When she had sung this she went into the middle of the tank. Then the cobra sang,

‘Cobra, O cobra, bring up the clear water,
Sendriman the young girl cobra stands on the wall.’

Then the first cobra, Nang Kuar, brought the water up out of his mouth and it went all round Dasmotin Kaniya and slowly rose about her body. As it rose she sang,

‘The water has risen from my ankles to my knees,
O my brothers and sisters-in-law drink this clear water,
O my cows and buffaloes, drink this clear water.’

Then the water rose to her waist and she sang,

‘The water has risen from my knees to my waist,
O my friends and companions, drink this clear water.’

Then the water rose to her shoulders and she sang,

‘The water has risen from my waist to my shoulders,
O all you villagers drink this clear water,
O my elephant and horses, drink this clear water.’

Then the water rose to her chin and she sang,

'The water has risen from my shoulders to my chin,

O all you birds, drink this clear water,

O all you butterflies, drink this clear water.'

Then the water rose above her head and she was drowned. When the water had covered her, Nang Kuar the cobra caught her and carried her away to his house and married her.

So two or four years passed. Then Nang Kuar said to his wife, 'Come, let's go and visit your mother's house.' Dasmotin Kaniya said, 'I don't want to go there. You will kill my brothers.' Nang Kuar said, 'I won't kill them; come along, we must go and see them.' But she forbade him to go, again and again, but the cobra took no notice, so at last they went to the house.

When they reached there, the ten brothers received them with honour, and Dasmotin Kaniya greeted her brothers and sisters-in-law with weeping. Four or five days passed happily. Then one day, the ten brothers said to Nang Kuar, 'Come, let us go hunting.' Nang Kuar said, 'Very well, I will come.' So the ten brothers and Nang Kuar went to the forest. When they got there the ten brothers said to Nang Kuar, 'How long are you? Show us.' The cobra stretched itself out on the ground, and at once the ten brothers struck it with their axes and cut it into ten pieces.

In the evening, the ten brothers went home. Dasmotin Kaniya was standing in the door with a lighted lamp on her head and a pot of water in her hand. First of all the eldest brother came home riding on his horse. Dasmotin sang,

'O brother, you have come first on your horse,

How far behind is my Nang Kuar's horse?'

The eldest brother said, 'O he's somewhere behind.' When the second brother came, she sang,

'O brother, you have come next on your horse,

How far behind is my Nang Kuar's horse?'

In this way she greeted each of the ten brothers. Last of all came the youngest brother and he said, 'He is far behind us.' Then the girl understood that the brothers had killed her husband. When night had fallen she said to the youngest brother, 'I will give you my ornaments and much money; only show me where Nang Kuar is.' The youngest brother said, 'We asked him to stretch

himself to show how long he was, and we cut him into ten pieces.' Then Dasmotin gave the boy her ornaments and her money.

Dasmotin said to her brothers, 'O brothers, you have killed Nang Kuar and you have done well; come let us burn his body on the pyre.' The ten brothers and Dasmotin Kaniya went to the forest to burn Nang Kuar's body. As they went they gathered a great quantity of wood; they prepared a pyre and laid the ten pieces of Nang Kuar's body upon it and covered the body also with wood. Then they lit the pyre.

When the fire leapt up strongly and the smoke was rising, Dasmotin Kaniya cried, 'O brothers, look up and see how many sparrows are coming out of the smoke from my cobra's body!' The ten brothers all looked up to see what it was and Dasmotin Kaniya at once jumped into the fire and died there.

The ten brothers went weeping home.

2

BASUK NAG AND THE BAIGA

A Baiga tale from Silpuri, Mandla District

In her old age a Baigin became pregnant. She said to her old man, 'Because of my pregnancy I desire to eat mushrooms.' The old Baiga went to the jungle and searched, but could not find them anywhere. At last weary and dying of thirst he came to a spring but it was dry. He saw a crab's hole, and the crab sent water out from it. The old Baiga drank the water and rested in the shade of a tree. Near that tree there was an ant-hill in which lived Basuk Nag. The cobra asked the old man what was the matter and listened to his tale. At last Basuk Nag said, 'I will get you the mushrooms, but if your child is a daughter, then you must give her to me for wife.' The old man agreed. On his finger was a silver ring. Basuk Nag made him put the ring in a hole in the ground, and cover it with a cloth. When he had done so, Basuk Nag recited a charm and they lifted the cloth, and there were mushrooms.

When the time for the woman's delivery approached, Basuk Nag took the shape of a fly and flew into the house to see what would happen. A girl was born, but the parents declared that it was a boy. But Basuk Nag had seen everything, and insisted that the

girl should be given to him. So when she was old enough, the father took his daughter to be married to the old cobra. As they were going, they came to a tank in which was a beautiful lotus growing. For Basuk Nag had taken that shape. When the girl saw it, she said, 'I want that flower to put in my hair for my marriage.' And she went into the water to fetch it. As she went she sang, 'O father, I've not reached the lotus, and the water is up to my knees.' And the father replied, 'Go further, my daughter, go further.' She went deeper and sang, 'O father, I've not reached the lotus, and the water is up to my waist.' And the father replied, 'Go further, my daughter, go further.' She went still deeper, and sang, 'O father, I've not reached the lotus, and the water is up to my neck.' And the father answered, 'Go further, my daughter, go further.' At last she went beneath the water, and the cobra took her away. But her father broke his head against the side of the tank and died for sorrow.

In the Baiga's house, from the girl's placenta which had been buried in the ground under the place where she had been born there grew up a flower, and out of the flower came a boy. But soon after his birth, the old mother died, and he was left alone. He made a *kingri*, and collected enough rags from the village to make a gay turban, and went begging from place to place and singing,

'My mother died in her age carrying dirt to the dung-hill.

My father died on the bank of the lake.

My sister was carried away by Basuk Nag.

So I am left to wander with a turban made of rags.

Old mother, give me a handful of something to eat.'

At last he reached the place where his sister was living. When she had heard the song several times, she understood who he was and embraced him and wept.

The boy made his home with Basuk Nag and his sister. They went every day to the jungle and set snares for animals, and the boy used to bring home a lot of food to eat. But Basuk Nag used secretly to eat all that it caught, and came home without anything. And one day, Basuk Nag ate all that was caught in its own snares and in the boy's and went and sat in the road with its mouth open to eat the boy also.

But the boy was ready. He cut Basuk Nag to pieces with his axe and made a pile of the bits. Basuk Nag was so big that out

of its blood flowed a river, and the pile of its bones and flesh was like a mountain. When the boy came home, his sister asked him, 'Where is your brother-in-law?' The boy replied, 'Don't trouble about him. Come, let us go and live together in the mountains.' So full of happiness, they went and made their bewar in the jungle, and caught every kind of animal in their snares for food.

3

THE GIRL AND THE SNAKES

A Baiga story from Kenda Zamindari

Karandaniya Raja lived in his village with his wife and two sons. After his wife's death he asked his sons, 'Shall I arrange a marriage for you or for myself?' They said, 'Find a new wife for yourself and we'll both call her mother.' So the Raja married again and brought his wife to the house.

Every day the Raja went to his court, the sons went out hunting and the Rani cooked their dinner. So many days passed. But one day the Rani took a broken bed to the stable and lay down on it. When the Raja came home there was no food for him. He looked for his wife and when he found her and asked what was the matter, she said, 'Have I married you or your sons? Why do they always make love to me?'

Then the Raja was very angry and wrote on the wall of his house that his sons were to go away to the forest. When they came back from hunting and saw this, they ran away. They went far into the forest, and when night came they had nothing to eat or drink. They lay down under a tree and the elder brother went to sleep and the younger watched.

In that tree lived two birds and many chicks. At the foot of the tree was a great snake. Every day when the birds went out to get food the snake climbed the tree and ate two of the chicks. When the younger brother saw it, he killed the snake with his sword.

When the birds came home and saw the dead snake they were very pleased, and said, 'We must give this stranger something to eat.' So they let two of their chicks drop to the ground, and the younger brother roasted them. He ate one and then woke his brother and gave him the other while he himself went to sleep in his turn.

The elder brother ate his chick and got up and went on his way, leaving his brother alone in the forest.

When the boy awoke and found himself all alone, he began to weep. Weeping, he went along the forest path.

The elder brother went on till he came to a town where was a Rani who married a new husband every day and killed him every night. The villagers asked him if he would marry the Rani and he agreed. That night while they were sleeping together, the boy stayed awake, and presently saw two snakes come out of her nostrils. With his sword he killed them and put them in a basket under the bed. In the morning the servants came to bury him and took him by the hands and feet to carry him out. But he got up and showed them the dead snakes. So each went away to his own house.

Then the Rani and he lived together, and after some days the younger brother came there, and began to work in a potter's house. The potter's son was blind of one eye, deaf of one ear, maimed in one arm, lame of one leg. No one would marry him. The boy went out to get a bride. He was very handsome and quickly found a girl. But after the marriage the potter buried him under the wheel and gave the bride his own son instead. But the girl cried, 'Come to me, my true husband', and the boy came out from under the wheel and they ran away to the elder brother's house. When the elder brother recognized him he wept and took them both to live with him.

4

THE TWO SNAKES

A Muria story from Kachora, Bastar State

Long ago there was a Muria Raja called Jagat Pal Singh. He used to live in his house and never went to work in the fields. One day his wife said to him, 'Ours is a field-caste. You always sit at home and never work in our fields as you ought to.' After she had bothered him for many days the Raja went out to his field to guard the crops from animals and birds. As he was sitting there he saw smoke coming from the forest where the trees had caught fire and soon a snake with its body on fire came out of the jungle, crying, 'Cool me or I shall die of heat.' The Raja said, 'Brother Snake, I

have no water here, but come into my mouth and cool yourself in my belly and later you can go where you will.' The Raja opened his mouth and in went the snake.

When the Raja thought that the snake was cool enough, he said, 'Come out, brother, and go where you will.' But the snake said, 'No, the food and drink here is very good, and I don't want to go outside. I am going to stay here.' The snake, therefore, stayed in the Raja's belly and grew fatter and fatter, but the Raja got thinner and thinner until at last he could rule no longer. He gave his kingdom to his son and went to do penance in the jungle.

The poor Raja wandered on and on until at last he came to another kingdom. There he found a Marar and said, 'Give me some work to do.' The Marar said, 'What can a thin creature like you do?' But the Raja said, 'At least, let me guard your crops. I do not want any wages, but give me something to eat.'

So it was agreed. Now the Raja of the kingdom to which the beggar-Raja had come had six sons and one daughter. One day he asked them, 'How do you get your food and comforts? By whose efforts do you get them?' Each boy answered in turn, 'O father, it is by your efforts and virtue that we eat our food.' But the daughter said, 'I live by my own efforts.' When the Raja heard this he was very angry and said to his Diwan, 'Find this girl a husband who will make her a widow within three days'.

The Diwan went out to find an old husband for the girl. A constable said to him, 'The other day I saw a scarecrow in the Marar's garden. Perhaps he would do.' The Diwan went to see the poor Raja and arranged for his marriage to the princess. After the marriage, the girl's father was very angry and said, 'Let them go away into the jungle, give them nothing, let them die. I don't care what happens to them.' The police took them out into the jungle and left them alone without food or drink.

The poor Raja and his young wife wandered on until they came to another city. The Raja said, 'I am an old man, I am dying. Don't live with me, but go and get yourself another husband who will give you happiness.' But the girl replied, 'I am your wife, and whatever sorrow we have I will remain with you, for we have been married to each other.' They built a little house outside the city and the girl worked by husking rice and grinding wheat in the houses

of their neighbours. In this way she fed her husband and kept him alive.

One day when the Raja was asleep, the girl sat by his side watching him and wondering how she could make him strong. After a little while she saw a snake come out of an ant-hill near their house. It came near them and began to talk to the snake that was living in the belly of her husband. 'O sinner,' it said, 'this great Raja saved your life and now for your own pleasure you are killing him. If only there was one person who would draw a line of gur in front of the Raja's mouth in order to tempt you out, he would kill you.' 'But you are a sinner too', answered the snake from the belly of the Raja. 'What a lot of money you have got hidden in your ant-hill. If there was a wise man anywhere about he would dig up your ant-hill and kill you and become very rich.'

The girl heard all that was said. When she went to get her wages for grinding wheat the next evening she begged for a little gur instead of money. When her husband went to sleep she put the gur in front of his mouth and soon the snake, tempted by the sweet smell, came out and she killed it with her axe. Then she went to the ant-hill and dug it up and soon she found the other snake and killed it. There was a great pot of gold.

When the Raja woke up he felt well again and soon he became fat and strong. With the pot of gold that they had found he and his wife became very rich. He returned to his own kingdom and there he lived with his two wives in great content.

Since that day the Muria have eaten snakes. For once they gave us much trouble, but now we trouble them.

5

THE SNAKE AND THE COCK

A Gond story from Surguja State

There was a Gond named Mansingh. His wife was young; he loved her greatly. One night she went to relieve herself by an ant-hill near the house. As she squatted down, the ground broke, and a tiny snake came out and entered her body. It remained in her belly and grew fat. Mansingh thought his wife was pregnant and was pleased. So twelve months passed.

One day Mansingh and his wife went to a bazaar. The girl sat on the verandah of a merchant's shop. Her husband stood and asked for medicine to make the child come soon. As the girl sat there, the snake poked out its head from under her sari. The merchant saw it and told Mansingh what was the matter. 'Get a crowing cock. Tie her hands and feet to four sticks. Tie the cock near her feet. Open her clothes and run away.'

Mansingh recognized the wisdom of the merchant. He took his wife home. He tied a cloth round her eyes and bound her hands and feet to four sticks. He brought a fine cock and tied it near her feet. He opened her clothes and went away. The girl lay there very frightened. Soon the cock crowed. Out came the snake. They waited till the snake had caught the cock, then came with sticks and killed it. Afterwards there was no more trouble.

6

HOW THE SNAKE CLAN BEGAN

A Muria story from Ulera, Bastar State

A boy lived with his widowed mother. One day she went to the bazaar and he was left alone in the house. From somewhere or other a Bairagi came begging to the house. The boy said to him, 'O Bairagi, teach me some wisdom and I'll give you a pot of rupees.' Then said the Bairagi, 'Well then I teach you this charm: without cowries go not to the bazaar: without company go not on the road: he who, obeying these precepts, goes to work in the rice-field, will win the Raja's daughter.'

So saying, the Bairagi took the pot of rupees and went his way. Presently another Bairagi came to the house, and the boy said, 'O Bairagi, teach me some wisdom and I'll give you a pot of rupees.' Then said the second Bairagi, 'Well then I teach you this charm: without cowries go not to the bazaar: without company go not on the road: he who, obeying these precepts, goes to work in the rice-field, will win the Raja's daughter.'

So saying, the Bairagi took his pot of rupees and went his way. Soon a third Bairagi came by and to him the boy made the same offer and received the same reply. He too went on his way with a pot of rupees.

In the evening the old mother came home from the bazaar with a little gram that she had bought. The boy said, 'O mother, mother, I have given away the three pots of rupees, but I have learnt wisdom today.' The mother said, 'Tell me this wisdom, my child.' The boy told her the Bairagi's charm.

But when she heard it, the old woman was very angry. 'You wretched child, to throw away all our money for such nonsense!' And she gave him a good beating. The boy said to himself, 'If my mother beats me for my wisdom, I won't stay here' and he ran away from the house.

As he went along he remembered his charm and he began to search for company on the road. He could find no one, but after a time he met a crab, so he made friends with it and tied it up in a bit of cloth and carried it along. Presently he reached a city. Now in this city a snake and a crow had become Mahaprasad friends. They lived together in a mango tree; the crow lived in the branches, and the snake in a hole below. Whenever anyone came by, the crow used to say '*Kao kao*' and the snake would come out of its hole and kill its victim. Thus the snake killed many of the people of that city.

The boy came to the tree and lay down to sleep in its shade. The crow said, '*Kao kao*' and the snake came out of its hole and bit the boy and killed him. Then the crow flew down to eat the boy and sat on his head. The crab came out of its cloth and caught the crow's foot with its claw. The crow cried, 'Come out, come out and give life back to this man, or I'll be killed myself.' The snake came out of its hole and sucked the poison from the boy and made him alive again. It was just going back to its hole when the crab caught it with its other claw.

When the boy recovered his senses and sat up, he found his friend the crab holding these two enemies in its claws. The crab said, 'Don't sit there looking at me; kill these enemies at once.' So the boy killed the crow and the snake, cutting off the snake's head and the tail, and the crow's head and one foot and one wing. He tied them all up in his cloth and, taking the crab, went on towards the city. There he got work in the rice-field of a certain merchant.

After some days came an order from the Raja that whoever could kill the snake would be given his daughter in marriage. All the people of the city went out to find the snake. A sweeper

whose nose was eaten away by syphilis found the dead snake under the mango tree and took it, after giving the dead body two or four blows with his stick, to the Raja crying to the other sweepers, 'Don't touch me: I am the Raja's son-in-law.'

When the Raja saw the face of his future son-in-law, he was afraid and he said, 'We must see first if this is really true.' But the man showed the body of the snake, saying that he had had to destroy the head and tail in order to kill it. So, sad and afraid, the Raja gave orders for the marriage-booth to be prepared.

When the boy heard of it he left the rice-field and went to see what was happening. He went to the Raja and, standing before him with folded hands, said, 'O Maharaj, where is the head and the tail?' The Raja sent his horsemen to search for them in the place where the sweeper said he had killed the snake, but they could find nothing. Then the boy brought out from his cloth the snake's head and tail and the head, wing and foot of the crow, and told what had really happened. The Raja had the sweeper killed and buried, and married his daughter to the boy, giving him many rich presents.

After the marriage the boy and the Raja's daughter were living very happily. But one day the boy went late to work in the merchant's rice-field, and said, 'Don't send me away, let me work today.' The boy did a little work, then stood up and looked towards the city. The merchant shouted, '*Are, mailotia porta*, you come here last of all, and then you standing looking at your house. How can I give wages and work to a fellow like you?' The boy said, 'It's time for food, I was looking to see if the Raja's daughter was bringing my pej or no.' The merchant abused him still more, '*Mailotia porta*, will the Raja's daughter be bringing pej for the likes of you?' The boy said, 'Certainly the Raja's daughter will bring pej.' The merchant said, 'If the Raja's daughter brings you your pej, I'll give you all I have; if she doesn't I'll kill you and bury you in this field.' So they wrote a bond.

After a little while came the Raja's daughter, sitting on an elephant, and on her head a pot of pej, a band playing in front and behind. When he saw it, the merchant bowed his head. After the boy had received his pej at the hands of the Raja's daughter, he removed his lingoti and put it on the merchant, and dressed himself in the merchant's fine clothes, and drove him away.

After they had lived in the merchant's house for a little while in

great happiness, the merchant sent men to kill the boy. But the boy had kept the snake's head and tail, and when the murderers came into the house, the head and tail joined together and the snake bit the men and killed them. Then it said to the boy, 'I am going to kill you also.' But the boy said, 'If you spare me I'll worship you as a god.' From that day the boy belonged to the Nag, the Snake Clan.

At last the boy sent for his mother and they lived happily together in the merchant's house.

NOTE 1

Sati

Sati, a word which means 'good' or 'truth', is the name given to the widow who at one time was burnt alive with the corpse of her husband. This practice, which has been notorious for India, was actually an old Indo-Germanic custom and at one time prevailed throughout the Aryan world. It was known in Slavonic countries, and in Greece there is the story of Evadne who, when her husband was killed before Thebes, destroyed herself upon his pyre. In some accounts, Cænone also threw herself onto the pyre on which the body of Paris was being cremated. Examples of the custom have been reported from ancient Egypt and from China.¹

The custom has long since, with a few occasional exceptions, died out in India. But traces of it remain. For example, there is (or was) a Bhil custom recorded by Hislop, whereby the wife of a dead man was carried along with him on the bier to the burning ground, where she was laid down. Here she broke her marriage necklace and her ornaments and they were consumed with her husband's body.² In a Bison-horn Maria funeral, the widow and even some other female relations may throw themselves on the bier and later on the ground beside the pyre. Both Maria and Muria women break their bangles and throw their ornaments onto the pyre.

The folk-tales throw a curious light upon this custom. In the present collection we have the girl in Chap. XXI, 1, who burns herself on the pyre of her monkey-husband. In Chap. XXII, 1, Dasmotin distracts her brothers' attention by crying, 'Look and see the sparrows flying out of the smoke' and throws herself into the fire. So in a Santal tale, when a youth married to a Bonga girl has been murdered and his pyre built by a couple of dogs, she tells them to look up and see the stars shining in the day-time. As they look up she throws salt into their eyes, and while they are blinded

¹ Crooke, i, 185; Penzer, i, 258.

² Hislop, Appendix, iii.

springs into the flames.¹ In another Santal story a girl marries a monkey and her indignant father kills it. They decide not to throw away the body but to burn it as if it were a man. When the pyre is well ablaze the girl cries, 'O look what is happening to the stars in the sky.' Then when everyone looks up she throws sand into their eyes and leaps onto the pyre, thus dying with her monkey-husband.²

A very curious story from the opposite point of view has been recorded from the Ho.³ Here a she-crab falls in love with a Ho youth and in order to win him steals his flute and clothes. She tells him that if he wants them back he must go into her hole with her. He refuses and returns home disconsolate. His mother goes to the crab and begs her to return her son's property but the crab is determined to win the boy as her husband and refuses. At last the relatives light a great bonfire, and presently the youth's mother goes to the crab's hole with her hair dishevelled and face wet with tears crying, 'You have killed my child; he refused to eat and now you can see his funeral pyre blazing high.' The she-crab gets out of her hole and stands on tip-toe the better to see the fire. She beats her breast and laments that her husband has left her behind. Placing the youth's clothes and flute on her head she goes weeping to the fire and flings herself upon it as a true Sati.

NOTE 2

The Dohada

Among the aboriginals of Middle India the cravings of a woman during her pregnancy are attributed to the desire of the life that is hidden within her. This idea is indeed implied by the Hindi name given to such a longing, the *Dohada* or 'two-heartedness.' It is believed that if the craving is not granted the woman's body will swell and the child may be born deformed. In Mandla the most common cravings of Gond women are for beef, which is now forbidden to them, and for earth.

The *Dohada*, says Bloomfield, 'a trivial and intimate event in woman's life-history', is not allowed to flit uncaught through Hindu thought.⁴ Sometimes human beings have these cravings, but not uncommonly animals and even trees are affected. The craving is more than a mere embroidery to a story. It definitely advances the plot or suddenly diverts it in some desired direction. Bloomfield gives six different ways in which the *Dohada* motif is used in Hindu fiction:

1. It directly injures the husband or impels some act on his part which involves danger.

¹ Bompas, 113.

² Bompas, 129.

³ J.B.O.R.S., ii, 284.

⁴ M. Bloomfield, 'The Dohada', J.A.O.S., xl, 1-24.

2. It prompts him to deeds of heroism.
3. It takes the form of pious acts or aspirations.
4. It is used simply as an ornamental incident.
5. It is feigned by the woman in order to accomplish some purpose.
6. It is obviated by tricking the woman into the belief that her desire is being fulfilled.

The only incident in which this motif occurs in the present collection does not fit into any of these classes. Here a woman gets a craving for mushrooms and this can only be satisfied through the intervention of Basuk Nag the cobra, who grants her desire on condition that the child born should be handed over to him. Here the motif is more than a mere ornament, for it sets the scene for the whole story.

But there is a very interesting variant where a sister has a quite illogical craving which subjects her brother to precisely the same type of ordeal which in ordinary Hindu fiction a wife's *Dohada* subjects a husband. In Chap. VI, 4, a sister who loves her brother so much that she sleeps in the same bed and eats in the same plate has a craving for lotus flowers and her desire drives her brother into great peril.

In a Ghotul Pata from Bastar a sister similarly pretends to have a desire for the 'flower of sleep' and sends her brother to what she believes will be certain death in order to get rid of him.

BEAST FABLES

THE beast fables in central India follow the usual pattern. I have given several others in *The Baiga* as well as a number of aetiological legends in my book on the Muria. The third story here is on the common theme of the wily jackal which tricks the crocodile by telling it that it has caught in its jaws not his leg but the root of a tree. There are many parallels to this in the folk-literature. In a Santal tale the jackal, after getting itself free, succeeds in burning the crocodile to death.¹ There is a similar story in Steel's *Tales of the Punjab*² where the crocodile is a lady and amorous. There is also a Bengali tale with the same motif given in D. M. Majmudar's *Thakurmar Jhuli*.³

Story 5 has some resemblance to a tale from Bilaspur recorded by Gordon. Here the jackal is swallowed by a live elephant. The jackal feeds on the heart and kills the elephant, but is imprisoned when the skin dries up. When Mahadeo comes by, the jackal cries out that it is Sahadeo. Mahadeo proves his power by sending rain, the skin is softened and the jackal escapes.⁴

In the latter part of this story, we have an example of the famous motif of the Tar Baby.

Espinosa has argued strongly (as against Norman Brown who has defended an African source) for the Indian origin of this motif, and has traced its distribution, in an examination of 152 versions, from India to China, Africa and Europe. From Europe, it was transmitted to all parts of Hispanic-America, the Philippines and the Cape Verde Islands, and so to many other parts of the world.

In India, there are some very ancient versions. That of the *Samyutta Nikaya* is at least 2,000 years old; that of Hemachandra's *Parisistiparran* about 700. In the famous *Jataka* tale (55), the Buddha as a young prince is caught on a giant with sticky hair.

Espinosa has laid down as essential elements of the tale

¹ Bompas, 341.

² Steel, 232.

³ Majmudar, 213. See *J.B.O.R.S.*, xii, 575.

⁴ Gordon, 61. There are similar tales in Parker, i, 249 and Frere, 179. Cf. Penzer, i, 77.

the placing of a figure of tar or other sticky substance in order to catch a thief, an end which is achieved by a 'multiple-point attack and stick-fast episode with the dramatic elements involved'.¹ The story in our text conforms closely to the primitive archtype thus established.

It is worth noting in the final part of this same story, the villainous Ahir who marries his own daughter after murdering his son-in-law, becomes a leper as a punishment.

Story 10, the account of the mouse which got richer and richer as it exchanged one prize for another, is a weak and imperfect version of the South Indian tale given by Natesa Sastri in the *Indian Antiquary*. In Sastri's tale a monkey runs a thorn into the tip of its tail. It goes to a barber for help and the barber cuts off the tip of the tail and the monkey insists on having the razor in exchange. As it goes home it meets an old woman who is cutting fuel and gives her the razor to cut with. In doing so she blunts it and the monkey takes the fuel in exchange. The monkey takes the fuel on its head and presently meets an old woman making puddings. It gives her the fuel, and when it has all been burnt it says, 'Either return me my fuel or give me all your puddings.' As she cannot restore what is burnt she gives it the puddings and the monkey carries them away, and shortly meets a Pariah coming with a tom-tom. The Pariah is very hungry and the monkey offers to exchange the puddings for his tom-tom to which he readily agrees. The monkey now ascends with the tom-tom to the topmost branch of a big tree and there beats it in triumph crying, 'I lost my tail and got a razor, dum dum; I lost my razor and got a bundle of fuel, dum dum; I lost my fuel and got a basket of puddings, dum dum; I lost my puddings and got a tom-tom, dum dum'.²

¹ A. M. Espinosa, 'Notes on the Origin and History of the Tar-Baby Story', *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, xliii, 129-209; 'More Notes on the Tar-Baby Story', *Folk-Lore*, xlix, 168-181, where all references are given. W. N. Brown, 'The Tar-Baby Story at Home', *Scientific Monthly*, xv, 227-33.

² Natesa Sastri, *Indian Antiquary*, xvi (1887), 31.

I

THE MARRIAGE OF EARTH AND SKY

A Baiga story from Pandpur, Mandla District

One day the jackal said to itself, 'See the whole world is married, men, animals, birds, but the earth and sky are not married. I must arrange their wedding.' So thinking it made a little rain to fall, so that the mist would rise from the ground. Then he went to the Dhulia to ask him to drum at the wedding. The Dhulia received it with great friendliness. 'What can I do for you?' The jackal said, 'Come and beat your drums at this marriage; many will come to throw money to you, and you will be rich. And bring a fan and bamboo seat for the bride and bridegroom.'

On the appointed day, the Dhulia went with his drums and the jackal made him dance. When they heard the noise of the drums many jackals came and drank a great deal of liquor. As they drank, earth and sky drew near to each other for their marriage. Then all the gods came to that jackal and said, 'Don't do this, for if earth and sky are united men will die and the earth will be deserted.' But the jackal said, 'If I stop this marriage, what will you give me?' Bhagavan said, 'I will give you the whole world as your kingdom.' The jackal stopped the wedding, and earth and sky drew apart again. From that day the jackal tribe have gone everywhere and their cry fills the world.

2

THE CAMEL AND THE JACKAL

A Muria story from Sonawal, Bastar State

A camel and a jackal were friends. One day the jackal said, 'Give me your food to eat and I'll give you mine.' The camel said, 'Very well', and it took the jackal on its back and went to the jungle. The jackal ate the leaves of the banyan and the pipal tree. Then they felt thirsty. There was water in a hole and they went to drink. After that, the camel said, 'Now give me your food to eat.' The jackal took it to eat bhoir fruit. But as the camel

stooped down to get the fruit, a thorn stuck in its neck. It cried, 'Let me go, friend, let me go.'

But the jackal said, 'I haven't caught hold of you, friend, it is my companion.' After two or four days the thorn came out. Then one day the jackal made the camel fall down when it was drinking water. The camel began to feel angry with its friend, and one day went to a stream and lay down pretending to be dead.

Rain began to fall, and the water softened the parts of the camel. The jackal came by, and thought, 'My friend is dead, now I have food for many days.' It pushed its head into the camel's softened parts. Then the rain stopped and the sun shone. The parts closed about the jackal's head and it could not get out. Then the camel stood up, and the jackal cried, 'Let me go, friend, let me go.' But the camel said, 'For all your cleverness, look where you've got to.'

At last the camel sat down again, and the rain fell. The camel's skin once more became soft and the jackal came out. From that day the jackal tried no more tricks with its friend.

3

THE FOX AND THE CROCODILE

A Dhanwar story from Bilaspur District

A fox lived on the bank of a river and its food was the fish which it caught daily. One day it got very thirsty and went into the river to drink water. While it was drinking a crocodile caught it by its feet. The fox said, 'You stupid crocodile, those are not my feet, those are the roots of a tree.' So the crocodile let go of its feet and caught hold of some roots instead. The jackal escaped. On the bank of the river there were three or four mango trees and a lot of fruit had fallen from them. The crocodile hid underneath the fruit, but the fox saw what it was up to and when the other foxes came to eat the mangoes, it shouted, 'The mangoes belong to me; if you touch them I will kill you.' In this way all the foxes were saved. The crocodile thought to itself, 'Somehow or other I must kill this fox.' It discovered that at night the fox slept in a pile of chaff and went there to kill it. The fox ran into its hole under the pile of chaff and the crocodile followed it. But the fox

ran out of the other end and then shut the mouth of the hole with grass and went to a village near by. The fox said, 'Friends, give me some fire to light my pipe.' It took the fire and set the chaff alight and so burnt the crocodile to death.

4

THE TIGER AND THE CRAB

A Dhanwar story from Bilaspur District

A tiger went to drink water from a stream and a crab caught it by the nose. The tiger was very ashamed and hid its nose under the water. Presently an old fisherman came by but when he saw the tiger he started to run away. The tiger called to the fisherman to come and help him. 'No, nephew, I am not coming near you. You will eat me.' 'I swear by my mother that I won't eat you.' Hearing this, the old man came to the tiger and said: 'Why are you hiding your face under the water?' 'Look and see', said the tiger. When the fisherman saw what was the matter, he hit the tiger with his stick and it jumped and opened its jaws suddenly so that the crab loosed its hold and fell into the water. The tiger said, 'O man, you may eat that crab as your reward.' 'Certainly I will', said the fisherman.

As the fisherman went on his way home the tiger followed him and shouted, 'O my uncle', and the fisherman stopped. The tiger said: 'Uncle, I feel very hungry, I think I will eat you after all.' The fisherman said, 'You swore by your mother and I saved you from great trouble. How can you eat me now?' 'Very well', said the tiger at last, 'I won't eat you so long as you don't tell anyone what has happened.'

When the old man got home he sat down gloomily in a corner. His children gathered round him, saying, 'What's the matter, father? Why are you so sad?' 'Today', said the fisherman, 'I did a great work but I can't tell anybody about it.' 'O you must tell us', said the children. So at last the fisherman told the story and the children roared with laughter.

Now the tiger was listening behind the house and when it heard the children laughing, it was very angry and resolved to revenge itself. But the fisherman, knowing he had broken his promise, did

not dare to go out of the house. But one day he had to go to pay the taxes and on the way the tiger caught him. But the fisherman's daughter was with him and when the tiger saw the girl it said, 'If you will give me your daughter in marriage, I will spare you.' So the tiger married the daughter and the fisherman's life was saved.

5

THE ELEPHANT AND THE JACKAL

A Baiga tale from Rewa State

An elephant and a jackal were Jawara friends. One day the jackal said, 'Come along, let's go and search for food.' They went and found a field of kutki. The jackal said, 'Will you eat the top or the bottom of the stalks?' The elephant said, 'The top.' They both ate, and the jackal felt very thirsty. 'Let me get on your back; then we can see where there is water and we'll go and drink it.' It climbed up, but could see no water, and began to weep for thirst. The elephant said, 'Don't weep, Jawara, go into my stomach and you'll find plenty of water there.' The jackal climbed down, the elephant opened his mouth wide and in went the jackal. The elephant said, 'Don't do anything but drink. Don't look upwards.' When the jackal had drunk, it said to itself, 'Now why did it tell me not to look upwards?' So, of course, it had to look up, and there above it saw the liver. It was very pleased. 'Here is food above and water below', it thought, and began to eat. The elephant shouted with pain, 'Jawara, come out, come out.' The jackal took no notice, but went on eating till the elephant died and its body began to dry up.

Then Mahadeo and Sahadeo came by. The jackal said, 'Whom may you be?' Mahadeo said, 'Well, who are you?' 'I am the father of Mahadeo.' 'Mahadeo's father is he who makes the rain fall.' Then the jackal made a little water fall out of the elephant's body. 'That's nothing', said Mahadeo. 'You just watch me.' He caused a great storm of rain which fell on the elephant and made its body swell. Then the jackal easily slipped out through its fundament, and ran away. Mahadeo and Sahadeo ran after it as fast as they could, until they both got very tired. There was a

tank and Mahadeo and Sahadeo went down to the Maggerban under the water. Then when the jackal went to drink, a crocodile caught hold of its leg and said, 'I won't let you go till you make love to me.'

The jackal said, 'All right, but first of all let me go and catch hold of a tree instead.' Thus it ran away. But Mahadeo made an old woman out of wax and put some parched gram in her hand. Next time the jackal went to drink it said, 'Old mother, give me some gram to eat.' But she said nothing. Then it got angry and slapped her in the face and its right hand stuck in the wax. 'I'll hit you again if you don't let me go,' it said. She made no reply, so it hit her again with the other hand and that stuck also. 'Let me go', it screamed, and kicked her, and its foot stuck. At last it kicked with the other foot, and it was caught entirely. Then Mahadeo and Sahadeo came and gave it a good beating. They handed it over to a Baiga boy to tie up and beat every day five times with a shoe.

The boy did so and the jackal got very swollen. Another jackal came by and said, 'Brother, what are you eating that you have got so fat?' 'They give me bread and sweets and rice.' 'Then tie me up also; I too want to be fat.' So it took the string from its own neck and tied up the new jackal and ran away. When the Baiga came and began to beat the new jackal, it cried, 'No, no, it's the other one you should beat. Let me go and I'll get you a beautiful girl to marry.' The Baiga was pleased at that and let it go.

The jackal went to find a girl for the Baiga. It came to the Ahir's house and persuaded him to give his girl. Then it went and told the Baiga and he got ready the marriage party and came to the Ahir's house. In the party were Mahadeo and Sahadeo and every kind of bird. The Ahir was frightened. He thought it must be a very rich man. But when they came nearer and he saw they were only birds, he readily gave his daughter.

The Baiga took his wife home and made the jackal his father-in-law. The Baiga used to go to the jungle, leaving the jackal to look after his wife. He made the jackal cry *huwa huwa* all night for fear of Mahadeo and Sahadeo. The Baiga cut his bewar and came home. 'Now you can go and enjoy yourself in the jungle', he said to the jackal. When the jackal heard that, it ran away.

The Baiga took his wife to the jungle and set fire to his bewar. Then they came home, and when the fire was cool, he went to sow every kind of seed in the ashes. This time he left his wife at home to cook for him. As she was cooking her father came and took her away. When the Baiga found out he ran after them. Directly the girl reached her father's house, she gave birth to a son. Then the Baiga arrived and began a great quarrel, so the Ahir threw him into a dung-pit and buried him alive.

When the villagers asked, 'Whose child is that?' the Ahir said it was his, and told the people that the girl was his wife. But one night his cow spoke to him, 'You have gone to your own daughter. You will become a leper.' The next day he found that he really was a leper, and maggots bred in his feet. And so he died.

When he was dead, the girl dug up the Baiga, but there was nothing left but bones. She put seven folds of cloth above and seven folds below, and cried, 'If you are really my husband, stand up and live.' The bones came together, and the Baiga stood up, and they took the house and cows of the father and lived happily.

6

THE FROG AND THE JACKAL

A Raja-Muria story from Chitrakot, Bastar State

A frog and a jackal were friends. One day the jackal said, 'O friend, let's go and catch fish today.' So the two friends went to catch fish in the river. When they got there they quarrelled as to which should go first into the water, and at last the jackal went in first. When the frog also came in the jackal got onto its back saying, 'O friend, get some fish for me.' The frog said, 'Certainly I will.'

The jackal said, 'Do catch a *chipa*-fish', and got out of the water. The frog caught a *chipa*-fish and threw it out onto the bank. The jackal tied it to a peg in the ground. Then a hawk flew down and carried off the fish. The jackal shouted, 'Look here, hawk, in place of that fish bring a bundle of wood; otherwise one day or other I'll kill you.'

The hawk soon brought a bundle of wood. The jackal picked

it up and took it to a Pannara's house, saying, 'I've brought you some wood: make me some bread instead.' The Pannara cooked some bread and gave it to the jackal. The jackal took the bread to a Ganda's house and put it down outside. Soon the Ganda's son seeing the bread began to cry and the mother said, 'Go and see whose chicken that jackal has got.' The boy went and brought the bread and they ate it.

Then said the jackal, 'For that bread, you must give me some more; otherwise give me a drum.' The Ganda gave it a drum and the jackal began to play.

One day, playing on the drum, the jackal felt thirsty, and went to drink some water. At that moment another jackal came by and played on the drum. When the first jackal came back it said, 'You must stay with me till you are dead.' And it said, 'Go and bring me rope from seven jungles. And make me a potful of oil. And tie me up by my four feet, and keep me with you. Heat the oil and pour it all over me. By that means I'll go to Mahapurub.'

The second jackal did as he was asked, and in this way the first jackal died. The second jackal took the drum and ran away.

7

THE UNLUCKY FROG

A Gond story from Motinala, Mandla District

A frog went to visit a Gond. Jumping along, it reached his house and said, 'Uncle, Ram-Ram.' The Gond answered: 'Nephew, Ram-Ram. Shall I wash your feet with hot water or cold water?' The frog said, 'Cold water.' The Gond brought a pot of cold water and was about to wash the frog's feet when it jumped into the pot and washed itself and got out again. The Gond said, 'You are a clever frog, for you splashed out very little water.' Then the Gond with all honour made it sit down and said, 'What can I do for you today?' The frog said, 'Uncle, I'm going to see the Raja. Why not send your daughter with me to visit him?' The Gond was pleased at the idea and sent his daughter with the frog. The frog hopped along ahead and the girl followed. Presently the frog got tired and jumped on to the girl's shoulder and sat on her breast. The girl laughed at that and they went happily along the road till they reached the Raja's Palace.

When it saw the Raja the frog said, 'Raja Saheb, Ram-Ram.' The Raja was very pleased with the girl and thought, 'This frog's wife is prettier than mine.' He took her inside but made the frog sit on the verandah. Then the Raja said, 'Shall I wash your feet with hot water or cold water?' 'Cold water', said the frog. But the Raja brought a pot of boiling water and the frog thinking it was cold jumped into it and was killed. So the Raja married the girl and threw the frog's body away into the river.

8

THE FOX AND THE PARTRIDGE

A Gond story from Senguda, Mandla District

A fox and a partridge were great friends. The fox said, 'Friend, I have never eaten curds; do get me some.' The partridge took the fox and they hid by the roadside. Three Ahir girls came along the road carrying pots of curd to the bazaar. The partridge suddenly ran out from its hiding-place and knocked against their feet. The girls put their pots down by the side of the road and tried to catch it. While they were chasing it here and there, the fox ate the curds. When it was finished, it called loudly and the partridge ceased playing with the girls and flew away.

Another day the fox said, 'I have never laughed in my life. Do make me laugh.' The partridge took him to the side of the road and three Sadhus came by. The partridge flew out and perched on the first Sadhu's head. The second Sadhu raised his stick to kill it, but it flew away and the stick fell on the Sadhu's head instead and they began to quarrel. At this the fox laughed for the first time in its life.

Another day the fox said, 'I have never wept in my life. Do make me weep.' 'No', said the partridge, 'our friendship will be ruined.' But when the fox insisted, the partridge took it to the jungle and hid it in a thorn-bush. Then the partridge showed itself to some villagers who ran after it in hope of catching it and it led them to the thorn-bush and hid behind it. The villagers set fire to the bush in order to drive the partridge out, but the fox's hair caught fire and it ran out weeping.

The fox ran away to a Gond's house. The Gond was killing all

his pigs and hens and throwing away the heads. In one corner two dogs were eating them and in the middle a vulture was lying asleep, its belly stuffed with the meat. The fox thought it would eat the vulture and woke it up, but the vulture said, 'My flesh is not good to eat, but there are two horses over there—you will find them very much better.' The silly fox thought the dogs were horses and went to eat them, but the dogs killed it.

9

THE LUCKY BUFFALOES

A Gond story from Chhuri Zamindari

A Gond had two sons. They were very poor and only had two buffaloes to plough with. One day the buffaloes went to a pond and sank deep into the mud. The Gond tried to get them out, but they were stuck fast and he and his sons were in despair. In the evening they bought some liquor and drank themselves to sleep. In the middle of the night there appeared on the horns of the buffaloes four great earthen pots full of rupees and the buffaloes came out of the pond and went to the house. The Gond awoke and when they saw what had happened they thought they were still drunk, but they felt the buffaloes and took the pots off the horns and saw that they were real. Then they were very happy and buried the rupees in the floor of the house and put the buffaloes in their stall.

With this money the Gond became a Malguzar and got richer and richer until he became the Raja of Raigarh.

10

THE WAGTAIL AND THE MOUSE

A Gond story from Chhuri Zamindari and Mandla District

A wagtail and a mouse became friends. The wagtail made a house in a tree and asked the mouse to come and live with him. At first the mouse refused, but when the rains came its hole got wet and it sat on a stone. But the stone got wet and it sat on a leaf. But the leaf got wet and at last it stood shivering hu-hu-hu-hu at

the door. The wagtail shouted: 'Who's there?' 'It is your *jawara*, hu-hu-hu-hu' said the mouse. 'Why have you come?' asked the wagtail. 'Because my house is flooded with water, hu-hu-hu-hu.' 'I told you that is what would happen', said the wagtail. But she called the mouse in and lit a fire and the mouse dried himself before it, and presently went to sleep on a broken cot. Then the wagtail wondered what food she could give her guest. She looked here, she looked there, but there was nothing to eat. So at last she cut off one ear and the tail of the mouse and cooked them with rice. When the mouse woke up he was very hungry and ate his supper. He was delighted with the food and asked where such meat came from. The wagtail said that a Baigin had brought it. In the morning a woman came selling ornaments. The wagtail bought rings for her ears and when the mouse saw them he wanted some too. But the woman laughed at him saying, 'You've only got one ear. How can you buy a pair of ornaments?' The mouse felt his head and found he only had one ear and he felt behind and discovered his tail was gone. He saw the wagtail laughing and realized what had happened. He grew very angry and the wagtail had to fly for her life. She came to a river and flew across it. But the mouse could not follow her. So he got a lump of earth and tried to cross the river on it. But it broke into pieces and the mouse was left drowning in the water. Then came a fish and carried him on its back to the bank. But the mouse caught it and put it on a stone to dry. Then he went to sleep.

Presently a goatherd came by with his goats. He saw the fish and cooked and ate it. When the mouse woke up he was very angry and threatened to take the goatherd to the police. So the goatherd gave him a goat instead of the fish. The mouse took the goat along the road and after a time tied it to a tree and went to sleep again. Now a marriage-party came by. They saw the goat and were very pleased. They killed it and ate it for dinner. When the mouse woke up he asked the people, 'Where is my goat?' 'We have eaten it', they said. The mouse was very angry and threatened them also with the police, so they were frightened and gave him the bride instead.

The mouse took the girl back to the wagtail's nest and said to her, 'Now you clean the rice ready for my supper.' The mouse lay on his bed and watched her and sang to himself:—

'I lost a lump of earth and got a fish,
I lost the fish and got a goat,
I lost the goat and got a bride,
And now my bride is dancing, dancing, dancing.'

He sang this two or four times and the girl got angry and killed him and ran home to her husband's house.

Now the wagtail made a new house near the river and laid two eggs, one egg four hands long and the other five hands. After she had sat on them for a time she heard voices saying, 'When we come out, how nice it will be to eat our mother.' The wagtail was very frightened and flew away and perched on a bhoir tree. The tree said, 'What's the matter with you?' She said, 'My children are planning to eat me.' The tree said, 'Why are you frightened? Look at me, men cut me, they shake me, they break off my branches, they pick my fruit, but I take no notice, so why should you be afraid of two eggs? Go back and look after them.'

So the wagtail flew back to her eggs and sat on them but again the voices spoke, saying, 'When we come out, how nice it will be to eat our mother.' So again the bird flew away, this time to a banyan tree. The tree said, 'What's the matter with you?' 'My children are going to eat me', she said. 'Why should you be frightened?' said the tree. 'Look at me. Men cut me down, they shake me, they break my branches and I am not afraid. Why should you be afraid of two eggs? Go back and look after them.'

So the wagtail flew back to her eggs and sat on them and again she heard the same voices and flew away to a fig tree and this gave her the same advice. She went back, but when she heard the voices a fourth time she flew away, away, away beyond the seven seas and the sixteen rivers and the eggs remained by the river-bank and the life in them died.

II

THE KING OF THE BIRDS

A Muria story from Palli, Bastar State

Long ago the birds decided to make the peacock their king, so they bade him go and dress in all his finery before coming to sit

upon his throne. Away went the peacock, but he spent so long putting a feather here and a feather there, that the bird-people got tired of waiting.

Among them sat the owl, and the bird-people were impressed with his big eyes. 'We should make him king', they said to one another. Soon, when the peacock still did not come, they made the owl sit on the throne.

When all was over, the peacock came hastening in. 'You look as smart as a Ganda', cried a sparrow. 'From today you will be our Ganda.' And they drove him out of their assembly, for the Ganda must always live apart.

12

THE NAHARI BIRD

A Muria story from Palli, Bastar State

There is a bird called Nahari which is always crying 'Kenw ru, kenw ru? Where are you, where are you?' It is an unlucky bird, and if it comes and cries in a village the people fall ill.

What happened was this. Once a Nahar and his wife went to the forest to hunt. They stood below a great tree and looked up. There was a bee-hive. The man made little pegs and nailed them in the trunk, and so was able to climb up and eat the honey. His wife stood below watching.

Presently she cried, 'Give me a little to eat.' He said, 'Haven't you legs and feet? Come up and get some for yourself.' As the girl was busy eating, her husband came down pulling out the pegs as he came, and went away home. When the girl finished she saw her husband was gone, and there were no pegs by which she could climb down the tree.

'Where are you? Where are you?' she cried. But there was no answer. Her three little children were at the bottom of the tree, and they began to cry. For two days she went on calling and the children went on crying. Then Mahapurub heard and was sorry for her. He gave her wings and she became the Nahari bird. He covered the children with scaly shells and they became pangolins.

13

THE PIG AND THE JACKAL

A God-dhuka Lohar story from Sapos, Raipur District

A jackal once got very hungry. 'I'll go and get something to eat from uncle tiger.' So it thought in its mind. It met a pig on the way and said to it, 'Brother, that dirty uncle of mine abused you today.' 'Well, what did he say?' 'He said, "If ever I meet that dirty pig, I won't even leave its tail behind. If I don't eat it, I'll cut off my whiskers."' So said that jackal. The pig said, 'If I see that dirty tiger, I'll kill it with a blow from one foot.'

So the jackal came to its uncle. It made its face crooked. 'Why is your face crooked today, nephew?' 'I met a pig on the way and it said, "If I see that dirty tiger, I'll kill him with one blow from my foot."' The tiger said, 'Take me to the place.' They went there, but the pig had gone away. 'Why did you deceive me, nephew?' 'If ever I deceive you, you may cover my bottom with sal gum and beat me with an axe on top.'

Then the jackal went to the pig. It made its face crooked. 'Why is your face crooked today, jawara?' 'When I saw uncle tiger, he said again, "If I see that dirty pig, I will not leave even its tail behind."' 'Take me to the place, friend.' So said the pig. When they got there, the tiger had gone away. 'Why did you deceive me, friend?' 'If ever I deceive you, you may cover my bottom with sal gum and beat me with an axe on top.'

One day the pig met the tiger and killed it. But the pig too was so injured it began to die. The jackal came to eat both uncle and friend. 'Wait till I am dead, friend,' said the pig.

There was a fence near by, and a stump of a sal tree. It had just been cut and some gum was oozing out. The jackal thought it would sit on the stump and wait till the pig died. But when it sat down, its bottom stuck to the wood. Presently a hunter came by. He killed the pig. The jackal tried to escape but it was stuck fast. Thus the hunter killed that deceitful jackal with his axe from above, while it was stuck with sal gum from below.

CUMULATIVE TALES

CUMULATIVE tales are known throughout the world and I need only refer to the English *House that Jack Built* and *Tale of John Ball*, the Norse story of the *Cock and Hen Anutting*, the Talmudic story of the Kid and various tales in oriental literature. Steel and Temple give the Punjab tale of the 'Death and Burial of Poor Hen Sparrow'.¹ There is a similar tale recorded by Parker² and Gordon gives another from the Central Provinces.³ What is probably a Bengal tale of a 'Little Bird that found a Pea' and a Bulandshahr tale of 'The Old Woman and the Crow' are given in *North Indian Notes and Queries*.⁴

On the whole it is rather curious that these tales are not more common than they are. In my collection I am only able to present two stories of this type. That of 'The Ant and the Charcoal' was the first folk-tale I ever heard, on the first research tour that I undertook among the Baiga of Pandaria Zamindari. It was narrated on the side of a great hill in bright moonlight by the charming Hothu who made it sound like an enchanting poem.

I

THE CROW AND THE SPARROW

A Baiga story from Rewa State

A sparrow was living in a tree and laid two eggs. A crow flew down and said, 'I am going to eat your eggs.' But the sparrow said, 'First of all, get some water and wash your beak; then you can eat the eggs and go away.' The crow went to the well and said, 'Well! Well! You are the king of the wells; I am the king of the crows. Give me some water and I will eat the sparrow's eggs and dip my beak in the water-pot.'

The well answered, 'You must first of all get a water-pot.' The crow went to the potter and said, 'Potter! Potter! You are the king of the potters; I am the king of the crows. Give me a water-

¹ *Wide-Awake Stories*, 209.

² Parker, i, 201.

³ Gordon, 53.

⁴ *North Indian Notes and Queries*, ii, 45; v, 142.

pot and I will draw water and eat the sparrow's eggs and dip my beak in the pot.' But the potter said, 'First of all get me the horn of a deer and with that I will dig up some earth and make you a pot.'

The crow went to the deer and said, 'Deer ! Deer ! You are the king of the deer ; I am the king of the crows. Give me a horn to dig the earth with which the potter will make a pot in which I will draw water from the well. Then I can eat the sparrow's eggs and dip my beak in the pot.' But the deer said, 'Go to the dog and ask it to kill me and then you can take my horn.' So the crow went to the dog and said, 'Dog ! Dog ! You are the king of the dogs ; I am the king of the crows. Come and kill the deer and I will take its horn and give it to the potter and he will dig the earth and make the pot in which I will draw water from the well. Then I can eat the sparrow's eggs and dip my beak in the pot.' The dog said, 'Go to the buffalo and bring me some milk and when I have drunk it I will be able to kill the deer.'

The crow went to the buffalo and said, 'Buffalo ! Buffalo ! You are the king of the buffaloes ; I am the king of the crows. Give me some milk for the dog to drink and then he will kill the deer and I will take its horn and give it to the potter and he will dig the earth and make a pot in which I will draw water from the well. Then I can eat the sparrow's eggs and dip my beak in the pot.'

The buffalo said, 'You must go to the grass and bring me some grass and when I have eaten it, I will be able to give you some milk.' The crow went to the grass and said, 'Grass ! Grass ! You are the king of the grass ; I am the king of the crows. Give me some grass for the buffalo to eat and it will give me some milk, and I will give it to the dog to drink and he will kill the deer and I will take its horn and give it to the potter who will dig the earth with it and make me a pot in which I will draw water from the well. Then I can eat the sparrow's eggs and dip my beak in the pot.'

The grass said, 'You must go to the Agaria and bring a sickle to cut me with.' So the crow went to the Agaria and said, 'Agaria ! Agaria ! You are the king of the Agaria ; I am the king of the crows. Give me a sickle with which to cut the grass which I will give to the buffalo, which will give milk for the dog to drink and the dog will kill the deer and I will take the horn and give it to the

potter to dig the earth and make me a pot in which I will draw water from the well. Then I can eat the sparrow's eggs and dip my beak in the pot.'

The Agaria prepared a sickle and when it was ready he said, 'Where shall I put it?' The crow replied, 'Hang it round my throat.' The Agaria put the red-hot sickle round its throat and the crow died. It never was able to cut the grass and give it to the buffalo, so the buffalo gave no milk for the dog to drink, and the dog did not kill the deer and the deer did not give its horn to the potter to dig the earth and the potter did not make an earthen pot for the crow to draw water from the well and eat the sparrow's eggs.

2

THE ANT AND THE CHARCOAL

A Baiga story from Taliyapani, Pandaria Zamindari

An ant and a piece of charcoal set out on a journey. They came to a river and stopped to consider who should cross first. At last the charcoal went first and the ant followed him. The ant said, 'So a coal-black ant and a piece of coal have become friends!' After they had crossed the river the water became black. Presently a stag came to the river, and asked the water, 'How did you become black, O water? Till now you were quite clear.' 'Hear me, O stag,' replied the water. 'An ant and a piece of charcoal have turned me black, and now I shall turn you lame.' The stag drank the water and went limping up the hill to find mahua fruit. When it came to the tree, the mahua asked, 'What is the matter? An hour ago you were going to eat so much, but now you are taking nothing.' The stag replied, 'You belong to the plant caste and I belong to the animal caste, so what can you understand? But as I became lame, so do you become small.' And the mahua which had been very large became small. The stag limped away home.

Then a bird settled on the tree and began to eat. 'What is the matter?' it said. 'Yesterday I was satisfied with one of your fruits, but now with four or five I am still hungry.' And the mahua said, 'Hark to the tale of the coal-black water, the limping stag and the tiny tree.' When it heard it, the bird began to say, 'Chee-

pee, chee-pee.' It flew away and found a bhoir tree for food. But it could eat nothing. All the time it flew to and fro saying, '*Chee-pee, chee-pee.*' The tree said, 'What is the matter? Till now you used to come silently for food. Now you eat nothing and talk all the time.' The bird said, 'Hark to the tale of the coal-black water, the limping stag and the tiny tree; the poor little bird that missed its dinner—and bitter berries shall grow on thee.'

Early in the morning the women of the village went to fetch water, and one of them was the sort of girl who is always eating this or that. She plucked some berries and began to eat. 'What is the matter?' she asked the tree. 'Why are you so bitter?' The bhoir tree replied, 'Hark to the tale of the coal-black water, the limping stag and the tiny tree; the *chee-pee* bird and the bitter berries—and now a pigmy thou shalt be.' She had been a tall woman: now she became small. She went home and when her work was done, she took *pej* to the men of the house in the fields. 'Come, brothers, eat', she said, taking food out of the pot. 'Who is this?' said the men. 'Our girl was tall, but who is this pigmy?' 'Come and eat,' she replied, 'and I will tell you the secret.' When she had told them she said, 'Now you shall become bent.' And the ploughmen's bodies became contorted.

All day long they ploughed and in the evening they went to their Rani. When she saw them she said, 'Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram, what has happened? Tell me, for whatever you may say, you are my helpers and protectors.' 'Very well,' they said, 'Hark to the tale of the coal-black water, the limping stag and the tiny tree; the *chee-pee* bird and the bitter berries; the pigmy maid and the ploughmen three. And now a fatter thou shalt be.'

When she heard this, the Rani farted loudly, whereon the ploughmen stood up straight, the girl was restored to her proper height, the *chee-pee* bird finished its meal, the mahua tree grew again, the stag recovered of its limp, the water flowed clear, the charcoal was burnt in the Agaria's smithy and the ant reached its nest.

MORAL TALES

NONE of our stories end with a moral in the approved copy-book style. Few attempt to teach anything: indeed the atmosphere of most of them is thoroughly unmoral; abduction, murder, domestic infidelity, cheating and every sort of trickery seems to be judged on the sole standard whether or no it is successful.

But a few tales appear to have a more serious purpose. The stories in Chap. XI about the hero's pilgrimage to seek boons from a deity afford through his questions an almost limitless medium for ethical instruction. It is noticeable that in these stories the virtue praised is invariably some sort of generosity, the vice most condemned is meanness. Thus a tree withers because it does not share with the world the treasure buried at its root; a Raja fails in his tasks because he does not give to her husband his marriageable daughter; a wise man suffers because he does not share his knowledge. We find the same danger of refusing to share in the tales describing the anger of stories which their owner fails to tell. This is a very common sentiment among the aborigines of central India. It is believed that if a pregnant woman meanly closes her hand over the grain she is giving to a beggar, her child will be born deformed. The Muria of Bastar lay the greatest possible stress upon the equal sharing of work and often of goods within the tribe. Some of the Hill Maria still have communal village granaries.

The first story in the present Chapter aims at inculcating the typical Muria virtue of economy and hard work. The second and third stories are concerned with what is probably the chief ethical problem of the semi-civilized aborigines, their attitude to cows. The aborigines still have not made up their minds and these two stories teaching precisely opposite lessons show how ambivalent their attitude still is.

The Hindu attitude to the cow has often been discussed.¹ Its veneration is undoubtedly very old, although its flesh was eaten in Vedic times. But the high value attached to milk, the identification of the cow with speech which itself was regarded

¹ Penzer, ii, 240; Crooke, ii, 226; Crooke, 'The Veneration of the Cow in India,' *Folk-Lore*, xxiii (1912), 275-306.

as divine, the development of the doctrine of *ahimsa*, all strengthened by the belief in transmigration, produced the strict taboo on the killing of the cow which was already established in the *Mahabharata* and exists in spite of all contacts with Western civilization in India today. In popular village thought veneration for the cow has undoubtedly been strengthened by stories of Krishna's relations with the herdsmen, of Siva and his Bull, of Indra and the celestial Kamadhenu. But few aboriginals even now are acquainted with these stories and throughout the whole area under review beef is secretly eaten by many primitive tribes. It has generally been abandoned by the Gond of the Central Provinces, but it is eaten throughout Bastar, where bulls are sacrificed on most important occasions. The Agaria of Mandla have a regular mythology of beef-eating which I have described elsewhere.¹ The Larka Kol are said to attribute their fine physique to the fact that they eat beef. When they first met English soldiers, they were much impressed by their military powers, and finding that the English too ate the flesh of bullocks, paid them the high compliment of tracing their descent to the same pair of ancestors.² In this book, however, the cow is generally regarded not only as sacred but as filled with magic power. In the tale of Jangralal the dung of the bull, which is the real hero of the story, produces food and a Palace. Every part of its body is full of magic. Its horns turn into rats, its legs into horses, its bones into bright swords. The bull in several stories is represented as born of human parents, his brother being the boy-hero of the tale. Elsewhere, from two eggs come a human boy and a bull. Herds of cows are generally represented as merciful and ever anxious to help those of mankind who are good to them.

I

THE WASTEFUL WIVES

A Muria story from Masora, Bastar State

An old Muria and his wife had seven sons, of whom six were married. The youngest was still unmarried. They were rich people. Their daughters-in-law did not fill the fire-pots with the chaff

¹ *The Agaria*, 125 ff.

² Russell and Hiralal, iii, 508.

of rice and kodon and scraps of dry cowdung as they should, but put unhusked kodon into them and set fire to it. Then one day the old woman said, 'Daughters-in-law, don't put kodon into the pots.' But they took no notice. One day, the kodon said to itself, 'O Kodaie, call Dhanaie, Sonaie and Rupaie, and say, "Look, this old woman's daughters-in-law put me into the pots and burn me. Therefore I am not going to stay in their house."' '

Then Dhanaie, Sonaie and Rupaie said, 'If you're not going to stay with them, we won't either. Wherever you go, we will go.' So that very night, the four friends came to the old woman in her sleep and said, 'Old mother, your daughters-in-law always put kodon into the pots, so we are leaving you.' Saying this, the four friends left the house of that Muria.

The old woman woke in a great fright and told her husband of her dream. In the morning, they called their six sons and their wives, and told them how they had lost everything, and indeed when they looked round the house all the grain-bins were empty and the store of gold and silver had disappeared. Now they were very poor and could not get enough to eat.

The six brothers left the parents and their youngest son, and went to live separately. The old parents thought, 'Let us marry our youngest boy or we will be doing great wrong.' So the father went to a town to see a merchant, and gave him greeting. In olden days, the Muria too had been a merchant, and his friend asked what had happened that he should have become so poor. The Muria told him what had happened, and asked for a loan of five measures of rice and five rupees. The merchant at first would not believe his story, but at last gave him what he required.

The old woman had told her husband not to bring what he got back to their ill-fated house, but to keep it elsewhere. The Muria did as she said, and returning home told his wife what he had got. Then he went to the father of the girl to whom he was going to marry his son, and asked him to arrange the marriage without delay.

After the marriage, they came home with their son and his new wife, and once more they found themselves dying of hunger. For eight or nine days they had nothing to eat, and at last the old man called his six sons and said, 'Look, here I have a new daughter-in-law and she has had nothing to eat for eight or nine days and

she is dying of hunger. You must do something for our food. You must make a leader among you seven brothers who will give orders to the rest.' But the sons said, 'We too are starving; what can we do?' They said too, 'We cannot make a leader.' But afterwards they said, 'Let our new sister-in-law be our leader.' The old man said, 'Will you obey her?' The six brothers replied, 'We will obey her and our youngest brother; whatever they say we will do.' The old man said, 'You may obey, but will your wives obey?'

The wives came and they too promised to obey, so the old Muria said to the youngest boy and his wife, 'You are the leaders of this house: all will obey you.' The girl said, 'Well, but all must obey me.' Then the girl said, 'Let the six brothers go to the plough and let their wives clear the fields of grass. And we too will cook gruel and bring it for you to eat.'

So the six brothers went with the bullocks to the field, their wives cleared the fields of grass, and the two youngest took them their gruel to eat. While the brothers were eating, the youngest girl went and worked with the other women and said, 'Before I was married, I heard what rich people you were and how you put kodon in the pots, while people like us were dying for need of such kodon.' 'That is true,' said the women.

Then gradually, by working together and obeying all that the youngest girl told them, they saved money and grain and after a time they were rich once more and lived happily.

2

THE COWHERD'S SIN

A Binjhwar story from Sarangarh State

A cowherd took his cattle to graze in the forest. One of the calves was always straying from the herd and he got angry and killed it and threw it into a stream.

A few days later the villagers went to catch fish in the stream and went into the water. The cowherd was with them. All the others caught fish, but he got nothing. Then the bones of the calf caught his feet and he cried, 'Baa! Baa!' like a calf. His

friends ran to help him and found his feet stuck in the calf's head. When they saw that, the cowherd told them what he had done and he collected the bones and the head and carried them home. When nobody was looking he put the head of the calf in a pot and set it on the fire to cook, but when he sat down for supper the head jumped out of the pot and smashed all the vessels in the house and then beat him until he died.

3

THE BRAHMIN'S SIN

A Savara story from Sarangarh State

A Brahmin was wandering from village to village. On the way he came across some boys who had killed a calf and were roasting the flesh. When he saw them he said, 'Shame on you, murderers! You have killed and cooked a sacred animal. Throw away the flesh and bathe your bodies in the river. Then you will be clean.' But the boys laughed at him and said, 'No, we are going to eat the meat that we have cooked.' The Brahmin was angry and said, 'Then I shall tell the people of your village and they will punish you.'

When the Brahmin came to their village the people received him with great honour and gave him a place to sleep, but he abused them saying, 'The boys of this village are great sinners, for they eat beef.' When night fell the Brahmin filled his belly with the villagers' food and went to sleep. As he slept, there appeared in his mouth the two forefeet of a calf. In the morning the villagers went to wake their guest and they were astonished to see the feet of a calf sticking out of his mouth. When the Brahmin woke, the feet disappeared into his body. But the people said, 'Maharaj, you must have committed a very great sin to have the feet of a calf sticking out of your mouth.' The Brahmin said: 'No, I have committed no sin, it is the wicked boys of your village.' But the headman of the village was not afraid and he said, 'It was not the boys who sinned, it was you. They were poor and hungry and they ate what food they got. But you are a wise man and

you wanted to ruin their good name. Now unless you go and eat with the boys your sin will remain.'

So the Brahmin went to where the boys had cooked the flesh of the calf. Only the bones were left and the boys were burying these in the ground. The Brahmin said, 'Please give me some of the bones to eat.' But they laughed at him and abused him. Then he fell at their feet and said, 'Give me the bones or I'll die.' So they dug up the bones and he found a little meat on them and ate it and was freed of his sin.

MISCELLANEOUS TALES

IN this final chapter I have collected together a few stories which do not fit easily into any of the previous classifications. Story 1 is the strange account of a woman who succeeds by making an Act of Untruth in direct contradiction of the usual custom.¹

Story 2, which was recorded to the sound of the majestic thunder of the Chitrakot Falls, is a tale of water-fairies who like the Bonga in Santal tradition have their houses under water.² Story 3 is a cruel tale of a boy which again reveals hostility to the old woman which we have noticed in several other tales in this collection. It comes from a village near the boundary of Mandla District and Rewa State where it is always considered rather dangerous to go into a Raj other than one's own. Story 4 is not unlike a tale in the *Panchatantra* where a hunter kills a deer and a boar but is himself killed by the boar in its last agony. A jackal comes along, sees the three carcasses, piles them up but instead of eating them gnaws the sinew-end at the tip of the hunter's bow, whereupon as the cord is severed he is pierced by the bow in the throat and perishes.³ This is, of course, an example of the motif of the Rebounding Bow which we have studied in an earlier chapter.⁴

Story 5 has various parallels with a number of tales about people who by sheer good luck discover criminals or are able to prophesy the future.

There are several stories of this type in Bompas's Santal collection, for example, 'The Four Jogis',⁵ 'The Stolen Treasure',⁶ 'Catching a Thief'.⁷ Kalipada Mitra refers to a Bengali tale in D. M. Majumdar's *Thakurmar Jhuli*: 'A necklace worth a lakh of rupees was missing from the Palace. Astrologers and soothsayers came crowding, but none could divine where it was. Now a poor but lucky Brahmin (who had some reputation for finding out things) was ordered by the king to discover it on pain of being thrown into prison. The poor man demanded two days' time and came home. He racked his brains, drank

¹ Cf. *N.I. Notes and Queries*, v. 83.

² Edgerton, i, 220 ff; ii, 340 ff.

³ Bompas, 181 ff.

⁴ *Ibid*, 206 ff.

⁵ Bompas, 378, 380.

⁶ Penzer, vii, pp. xix ff.

⁷ *Ibid*, 294.

pots of water, and in distress appealed to the great goddess Jagadamba : "Alas, mother Jagadamba, you are killing me and my children ! Show me some remedy. O Jagadamba, was this in your mind ?" Now this last sentence was heard by a female garland-maker named Jagadamba or Jaga, as she was passing by the Brahmin's house. She used to supply flowers to the royal harem, and she it was who stole the necklace. Thinking that she was found out by the redoubtable Brahmin she came in, fell at his feet and confessed her guilt.¹

The motif is probably widely distributed in the oral literature.

I

THE MONEY-LENDER'S WIDOW

A Muria story from Kokori, Bastar State

There was a rich money-lender living happily with his wife and only son. In the village was a very great friend, a Kalar. The money-lender died and his funeral rites were duly performed. The poor widow was anxious about how she should preserve the wealth left behind by her husband : she feared that robbers would attack her, and she would be left with nothing for her son's marriage. She finally filled two pots with silver coins and handed them over to the Kalar friend for safe keeping saying, 'O Mahaprasad, keep these two pots of money safely until my son is married when I will take them away and thus keep up the reputation of my husband as a rich man.'

The time for her son's marriage now arrived and she went to the Kalar to take delivery of the pots of rupees. But the Kalar denied all knowledge of them and the poor woman was in despair. She finally called in the elders of the village who, on hearing her story, remonstrated with the Kalar and asked him to return the property. The Kalar, who still maintained that nothing had been given to him, said, 'Let her swear that she gave me two pots of rupees. Let her swear by her son.' The woman swore saying, 'If I have *not* given you the two pots of rupees, let my son die.' And immediately the boy dropped down dead. All present were now convinced that the widow was a liar ; they abused her violently,

¹ J.B.O.R.S., xii, 570.

and even refused to give a helping hand in the disposal of the dead body.

So she placed the corpse in a bullock-cart and was taking it along for burial, weeping bitterly on the way. Her cries attracted a passer-by who asked her what was the matter. On hearing her story, the stranger advised her to take the cart with the corpse back to the Kalar's house, summon the elders again, and this time swear saying, 'If I *have* given you the pots let my son rise up.' 'You must not', he said, 'use the word not.' She did accordingly and said in the presence of the elders and the Kalar, 'I made a mistake last time. It was not two pots but four that I gave my friend. If I have given you four pots of rupees, let my son live again'. Hardly had she uttered these words than the boy came back to life. Now the elders abused the Kalar for trying to cheat an old widow. The Kalar was thus forced to give her four pots of rupees, and lost the money he had saved for many years.

The widow carried the money home, and had her son married in great pomp, and so they lived and ate.

2

THE STORY OF BALUD KARIYA

A Raja-Muria story from Chitrakot, Bastar State

There were seven brothers; the youngest had not got a house of his own. His name was Balud Kariya. Every day he used to go to catch fish with his rod and line. One day, out of the waters of the river came Balmati Kaniya, beautiful and young. She said to Balud Kariya, 'Come with me to my house.' But the boy said, 'How can I come with you? My brothers and their wives will abuse me.' Balmati said, 'Then I'll catch you by the hand and drag you home.' The boy said, 'Don't do that; first I'll go home and tell my brothers, and then I'll come back and go with you.'

So saying Balud Kariya went home and told his brothers, 'I don't know how to drive a plough. Daily I'm going to catch fish.' And he took his rod and went back to the river. There Balmati had told her parents that a Gharjiya was coming. When

Balud Kariya reached the place he found the girl waiting for him on a rock.

Now a boy called Indamoka was going in a boat across the river and when he saw Balud Kariya and Balmati together he went down under the water and told the people of Balmati's house that 'Balmati has got her Gharjiya: do you approve of this or no?'. Then Indamoka came up out of the water and went to Balmati and she said, 'O brother, this is my Gharjiya: do you approve or no?' Indamoka said, 'That is very good.'

Balmati sat on the back of a tortoise and was going to her house in the river. But Balud Kariya said, 'I can't sit on a tortoise's back; my clan is Kachim; I can't sit on a tortoise.' So Balmati sat on the tortoise and the boy went along in the water, clinging to her hand.

When they reached the house, Balmati made a seat of the tortoise and offered it to Balud Kariya, but he said, 'This tortoise belongs to my clan; how can I sit on it? Nor can I eat the water of this place where a tortoise has been killed to make me a seat.' So in this way, Balud Kariya served as Gharjiya for Balmati for ten years, and in all that time he did not eat their water.

At the end of the ten years, Balud Kariya said, 'My brothers' eyes are full of dirt and pus because they have not seen me for so long. I must go home, I can't stay here any longer.' Balmati said, 'Then I must come with you.' So saying, they both came out of the water, and went to Balud Kariya's house. There Balud Kariya found his six brothers and their wives weeping for him and their eyes full of dirt and pus for love of him. But when they saw their brother they were very happy and at once they arranged the marriage, and made them a great feast.

3

A DANGEROUS RIDE

A Gond story from Karanjia, Mandla District

A Bhoi had a son and a clever horse. When the time came for that Bhoi to die, he said to his son, 'My son, go to visit every kingdom, but don't go to Rewa.' So saying he died.

After his death, the boy began to wonder why his father

had told him not to go to Rewa, and at last he decided to go there and see why his father had so warned him. He got his horse ready and rode away. After crossing the Narbada, he came to a village. There was a lake there on the banks of which many boys were playing. The Bhoi's son called to them to bring him some dried cow-dung pats for fuel. They replied, 'What will you give us if we do?' The boy replied, 'I'll give you something or other for them.' The boys brought the fuel, and the boy lit a fire and cooked his supper. When he had finished he mounted his horse and began to ride away.

But the boys followed him demanding 'something or other'. The Bhoi's son produced some money and offered it to them, but they refused saying, 'We won't take anything but something or other.' The boy said, 'I haven't got anything else.' But the boys took no notice and went on shouting for something or other. The Bhoi's son made his horse run swiftly and at last reached a village. The boys gave up the chase and returned to their games.

In that village was a blind woman. She had one eye. She came and caught hold of the horse's bridle, saying, 'So you're the Bhoi's son, are you? Your father took away one of my eyes long ago and has never sent it back. In place of my eye I've now got you.' And she caught hold of him.

The boy was frightened, but he said, 'Let me go now, I have a lot of work to do. In two or four days I will bring you back your eye.' The old woman said, 'Very well' and let him go. The boy rode away to a river. He sat down there and began to think. 'How wise was my father's advice! If I can get into so much trouble in the first village I come to, what will happen at the next?' So he started back.

Once again the one-eyed woman met him and said, 'How can I trust you to bring me back my eye? Leave your horse with me, then you can go home. And when you bring me my eye, I'll let you have your horse.' The old woman took the horse away, and the boy went on weeping.

As he went he met a jackal. The jackal said, 'What's the matter? Why are you crying?' The boy sat down and told him everything. The jackal said, 'Bring me two bottles of liquor and a cock, and I'll tell you what to do.' The boy went home and got the liquor and the cock and brought them to the jackal.

The jackal said, 'Get some gram and when the boys come chasing you throw it at them saying, "Here is something or other!"' Get an awl and go to the old woman and do what I will tell you.'

The Bhoi's son did as the jackal advised. He got some parched gram and tied it in a cloth. He bought an awl. Then he crossed the Narbada once again into Rewa State. When he came to the tank, the boys began to chase him, shouting abuse and demanding something or other. The Bhoi's son threw the parched gram towards them saying, 'Here is something or other!' The boys stopped to pick it up and the Bhoi's son went on his way.

Then the boy reached the old woman's house and said—as the jackal had told him—'Mother, in my father's box there are many eyes. I can't tell which is yours. But take out this other eye of yours and give it to me. I'll take it home and match it and bring them both back to you.' The old woman said, 'Very well, son, take the eye'.

The Bhoi's son stuck the awl into the old woman's eye and gouged it out. The old woman began to scream, and the boy ran to his horse. He mounted it and rode home as fast as he could.

4

THE UNLUCKY PARDHI

A Muria story from Metawand, Bastar State

In a village lived a Pardhi and his wife. One day they took their bows and arrows and went to hunt in the forest. They made a machan by the side of a lake and climbed up to wait for game. After a time a wild pig came to drink water and then a sambhar. The Pardhi shot at the pig and wounded the sambhar also, and both fell down and died. The Pardhi climbed down from the tree to get the flesh, but as he went a snake bit him. He seized a stick and killed the snake but himself died soon afterwards. His wife ran weeping home. The Pardhi's bow and arrows lay on the ground beside the dead man. At last came a fox. It went to the pig, but left it; it went

to the sambhar and left it; it went to the man and left him; it ate none of them. But when it saw the bow and arrows it ate them. But one of the arrows stuck in its throat, and it died. So everyone in that place was dead.

5

THE FORTUNATE PROPHET

A Kuruk story from Chitrakot, Bastar State

An old man and his wife lived in a village. Every day the old man went to work in his fields, and the old woman stayed at home. She used to cook *dāl-bhāt*, *bo-bo roti* and other good things and eat them before he came home; in the evening she would put fire in the hearth and begin cooking the evening meal. At last the old man grew tired of getting his food so late and asked his wife why she only began to cook when she saw him coming home. She said, 'I go to Chitpitti Gudurgumar Arpartenga bazaar.'

One day the old man took out the bullocks and let them go, but came back secretly and hid in a grain-bin while his wife was out fetching water. So he was able to see her cooking for herself. When she went again for water, he got out and went to bring back the bullocks. He got back just as she was putting fire in the hearth. This time he sat down and opening his hand looked at it carefully. 'You didn't go to the bazaar', he said, 'but you were here cooking *dāl-bhāt* and *bo-bo roti* for yourself.' 'How do you know?' asked his wife. 'My hand shows me,' said the old man. 'Look! Here is written *dāl*, and here *bhāt* and here *bo-bo roti*.'

The next morning, the old woman told all the women of the village what a great Panjihar her husband was, and the story went abroad.

One day the Raja's daughter went to bathe in a lake, and lost her necklace. She left it on the bank and a crow carried it off and dropped it underneath a tree. The Raja sent his servants everywhere to find it. Then he called all his Panjihar and among them the old man. The Raja said to them all, 'The Babi Saheba's necklace is lost: all of you look in your *panji-*

patra, and say whether she will find it again.' They all looked, but the old man was so frightened that he wanted to relieve himself and hurried off into the jungle.

As he went his stomach said '*Gurur*'. He cried, 'Hey my *boti* (inside), why are you saying *gurur*? You are going to be killed with a mango stick before very long.'

In that very place was a girl whose name was Boti, and when she heard the old man say this, she thought he was talking to her and was afraid. 'Why will the Raja kill me? I found the necklace under a tree. I was going to sell it, but when I saw you I threw it in a corner of the garden.' When the old man heard this he was very pleased, and no longer felt the need to relieve himself. He went back to the Raja and looking in his hand, declared that the necklace had been picked up by a girl called Boti who had thrown it in a corner of her garden. 'Who knows', said the old man, 'if this is true or no, but this is what my hand tells me.'

The Raja sent his sepoys at once and they caught Boti and she gave them the necklace. The Raja was very pleased and gave the old man many rupees and sent him home.

Some years afterwards, in that kingdom there was a great drought and famine began in the land. Once again the Raja called all the Panjihar, and with them the old man. Now indeed the old man was afraid. 'Surely he will kill me this time', he thought. When they were assembled at the Palace, all the magicians looked in their *panji-patra*, but the poor old man once again found himself desiring to relieve and hurried out to the nearest stream. There he sat down on the bank and wondered what to do. In that bank was a kundai rat and it was talking to its children.

'Keep quiet, my babes', it said. 'I must get a boat ready. On Monday, it is going to rain *tipis-tapas*, and on Tuesday it will rain *jal-mangar*.' The old man heard this and again felt pleased and the desire to excrete left him. He ran back to the Raja.

The Raja said to him, 'I have heard everyone else. Now what have you to say?' The old man looked carefully at the palm of his hand, and after a long while he said, 'On Monday it will rain *tipis-tapas*; on Tuesday it will pour *jal-mangar*. Who knows if it is true, but that is what my hand says.'

The Raja said, 'If this is true I will give you a village and lots of money. But if it is not true I will have you killed.'

The old man went home trembling, but on Monday down came a drizzle and on Tuesday a torrent, and all was well. The Raja called him to the Palace and gave him a free village and many rupees, and the old man spent the rest of his life in happiness.

Kissa hai pur gay; dāl bhāt char gay.

The story is finished; the feast is over.

A BRIEF INDEX OF THE TRIBES AMONGST WHOM THESE TALES WERE RECORDED

- AGARIA.** The blacksmiths, charcoal-burners and iron-smelters who live under several different names across a wide belt of country stretching from Palamau to Drug and Balaghat. They are probably the same tribe as the Asur of Chota Nagpur and may be the modern representatives of the ancient Asura. They have an elaborate mythology centring round the iron kiln and their 'virgin iron', the first product of a new kiln, is regarded as potent in magic.
- AHIR.** This is the great cowherd caste, also known as Rawat, Gaola and Kopa, of Middle India. Possibly descended from Abhira marauders from Central Asia, the tribe has now become greatly mixed and in our area Ahir marry freely with Gond and other aboriginals. In Bastar Ahir boys are admitted to the Muria dormitory and except for their special task of caring for cattle there is little to distinguish them from the surrounding primitive population. Owing to their association with the sacred cow they are regarded as a pure caste and everyone, even Brahmins, can eat or drink at their hands.
- BAIGA.** Probably the wildest and most primitive of the tribesmen of the Central Provinces, some of their remoter villages being comparable to those of the Hill Maria in the Abujmar. They are essentially a nomadic, hunting tribe living by axe-cultivation and as the oldest inhabitants of the country and those living closest to nature have a great reputation as magicians. The word Baiga is commonly used not only as the name of the tribe but also for any village priest or magician.
- BINJHWAR.** This is the name of the most advanced section of the Baiga which lives mostly in Balaghat District. It is also the name of a tribe of some 80,000 people in Raipur and Bilaspur. The Binjhar are probably an offshoot of the Baiga and represent their prosperous, settled and land-owning section.
- DHANWAR.** A small tribe, whose name means 'bowmen' and which is still famous for its archery, living in the wilder estates of Bilaspur.
- DHOBIA.** A tribe which must not, of course, be confused with the Dhobi or washerman caste. They have never been properly studied but appear to be confined to the wilder parts of south-eastern Mandla. The head of the tribe is known as the Raja but his sole task appears to be that of readmitting offenders against Dhobia tradition back into the tribe. The Dhobia, many of whom live in the Baiga Reserve, are a shy, non-communicative, unattractive people. There is nothing to dis-

tinguish them in method of living and religion from the neighbouring Gond and Baiga. Patangarh, where much of this book was written, was originally a Dhoba (now a Gond and Pardhan) village.

GOND. This is the great tribe of Central India, probably now well over three million strong, but it is as difficult to enumerate the Gond as to describe them, for different branches of the tribe call themselves by a score of different names and their culture varies from that of primitive hillmen to that of the advanced and liberal outlook of the Raja of Sarangarh. Gond kings formerly ruled over a great part of Central India, but today there are only half a dozen small kingdoms left. The majority of the Gond are peasants practising a more advanced form of agriculture than that of the Maria and Baiga. About half the tribe continues to speak its original Dravidian language. There is no single study of the Gond tribe as a whole and Russell and Hiralal's article must be read with caution.

KHUNTIA-CHOKH. A branch of the Agaria living in the Zamin-daris of eastern Bilaspur.

KURUK. A small tribe of fishermen, probably of the same stock as the Maria, who live all along the Indrawati and other rivers in Bastar State. They have been well described by Grigson at page 163 of his *Maria Gonds of Bastar*.

MARIA. Grigson has distinguished two types of Maria, the Hill Maria who live in the Abujhmar Mountains and are probably the most primitive and isolated people represented in this book, and the Bison-horn Maria who live in southern Bastar among the Dantewara and Bailadila Hills and in the hot plains of Sukma and Konta. The Bison-horn Maria get their name from the splendid head-dress of horns and feathers that they wear when dancing at a marriage. Of Hill Maria there are not more than fifteen thousand, but the Bison-horn Maria are a large tribe of probably one hundred and seventy-five thousand and are related to the Koya of Madras and Orissa.

MURIA. The word Muria is applied by Bastar officials generally as meaning aboriginal but in this book it is used for the Koitur of the northern plateau of Bastar, whose culture centres round the Ghotul or village dormitory. Some of the Hill Maria who have come down from the mountains and have settled on the plateau now call themselves Muria and I have distinguished them here by the name Jhoria-Muria. Other Koitur living near Jagdalpur, the capital of the State, and along the road to the Chitrakot Falls now call themselves Raja-Muria, as a sign that they have 'advanced' from the standards of their brethren of the north, have abolished the village dormitory and claim, though probably with little truth, to have given up the eating of beef.

- OJHA. These are picturesque minstrels and fortune-tellers. Their wives are the tattooers of northern Bastar.
- PANDO. This small tribe, which was not described by Russell nor distinguished in the C.P. Census until 1931, lives in eastern Bilaspur and Udaipur State. They are believed to have close affinities with the Bhuinhar and preserve the dormitory system in their villages. They are said to be a physically fine and attractive and interesting people. Little is known about them, though my slight contact with them has convinced me that they would fully repay detailed study.
- PARDHAN. The priests and minstrels of the Gond, traditionally said to be their younger brothers. At one time they had a bad character for thieving and cheating. Today they are a peaceful, romantic, musical people worshipping their sacred *bāna* fiddle and having the right to beg from all Gond of the same sept as themselves and to receive special gifts at their death.
- SAVARA. A very large tribe, probably now approaching the million mark, with a branch in Chhattisgarh and neighbouring States, though the bulk of its members live in Orissa and Madras. In the Central Provinces there is little to distinguish the Savara from their other aboriginal neighbours.

APPENDIX TWO

LIST OF ORAL TALES RECORDED FROM THE CENTRAL PROVINCES IN OTHER WORKS

- S. HISLOP. *Papers Relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces* (Nagpur, 1866). Part III contains the story of Lingo. Gondi text with excellent translation and some notes by Sir R. Temple.
- J. FORSYTH. *The Highlands of Central India* (London, 1871; reprinted 1919). Chapter V gives a version in the metre of Hiawatha of the lay of St Lingo taken from Hislop.
- R. A. STERNDAL. *Seonee* (Calcutta, 1887). At p. 97, Baiga tale about Bhimsen and Kookra Deo; p. 255, the legend of Rajah Chand Sa and the Hundred Headless Horsemen; p. 308, the song of Sandsumjee. This last tale is a prose abstract of a song recorded by O. Manger in *J.A.S. Bengal*, vol. xvi.
- The Indian Antiquary*. Vol. i, p. 190, 'Lake Legend of the Central Provinces' by J. Beames; vol. xxiv, p. 244; vol. xxv, pp. 48, 109; vol. xxvi, pp. 54, 104, 133, 165, 195, 280; vol. xxviii, p. 193; vol. xxx, pp. 31, 110, 200; vol. xxxi, p. 447; vol. xxxii, p. 97, 'Folk-Tales of the Central Provinces' by M. N. Venkata-swami; vol. xxviii, p. 302, 'Folklore of the Central Provinces' by M. R. Pedlow; vol. xxxv, p. 212, one story from the Central Provinces by M. N. Chittanah.
- G. A. GRIERSON. *Linguistic Survey of India* (Calcutta, 1904). Vol. iv, p. 508, a Gondi tale from Nagpur; p. 545, a cheat tale in Gondi from Chanda. The other stories given in Gondi are popular tales and New Testament parables. Vol. vi, p. 170, 'The Merchant and His Three Friends' recorded from the Mandla District; p. 199, 'The Banker and the Fisherboy' recorded from the Bilaspur District.
- A. WOOD. *In and Out of Chanda* (Edinburgh, 1906). Part II contains five tales claimed to be 'a valuable contribution to our knowledge of Indian folklore'. Norman Brown has shown that four of them are paraphrases, if not direct translations, of stories in Tutinameh, probably through the Hindi *Tota Kahani*. The fifth is translated probably through a vernacular version from the Vetala Pancavinsati story.
- E. M. GORDON. *Indian Folk Tales* (London, 1908). Contains seven short stories from the Bilaspur District.
- F. R. R. RUDMAN. *Mandla District Gazetteer* (Bombay, 1912). At p. 240 is a local version of a story of the Hasty Ingratitude type about the Kukurramath Temple.
- R. V. RUSSELL AND HIRALAL. *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (London, 1916). Vol. ii, p. 76, a tale of

- the Jackal and the Bahna; vol. iii, p. 47, an account of the Lingo Legend; p. 508, a Kol version of the origin of rice-beer; p. 578, two Korwa folk-tales, the second of which was recorded in the Uprora Zamindari; vol. iv, p. 185, the origin of plough cattle; p. 502, the origin of the Savara tribe.
- C. G. C. TRENCH. *Grammar of Gondi* (Madras, 1919). Vol. ii contains five good stories with the Gondi originals, of which two are myths, two ordinary folk-tales and one a tale about the Kumra clan.
- W. V. GRIGSON. *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* (London, 1938). At p. 322 there are two tales recorded from the Hill Maria, giving both Gondi and an English translation.
- VERRIER ELWIN. *The Baiga* (London, 1939). P. 175, story of the Baiga who married a Chamar (paralleled by Bompas, p. 408); p. 189, three condensed folk-tales about incest; p. 191, story reproduced in this book; p. 209, story of the origin of menstruation; p. 237, the story of Bir-Bakariya; p. 292, the widows of Nanga Baiga; pp. 308-18, creation stories; p. 311, the discovery of liquor; pp. 318-28, the origin of seed; p. 323, tales of the origin of the Baiga clans; p. 325, the Baiga and tigers; pp. 327 and 340, the origin of magic and witchcraft; p. 328, the coming of death; p. 329, astronomical legends; p. 363, the origin of disease; p. 424, two tales of the Vagina Dentata legend; pp. 481-97, ten animal stories; pp. 489-510, thirteen fairy tales.
- The Agaria* (Bombay, 1942). Pp. 74-8, origin of the Agaria clans; p. 78, folk-tales of a boy adopted by tigers and the origin of the Bagh sept; p. 90, creation stories; p. 97, tales of the War with the Sun; p. 192, tales of the origin of the gods; p. 115, a tale of a Sadhu and a Fire Maiden; p. 125, two stories illustrating the Agaria attitude to cows and beef-eating.
- Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943). At p. 60, origin of magic; pp. 63-4, stories about witches; p. 83, story about the dangers of adultery; pp. 131-3, stories about alcohol; pp. 181-3, stories of creation, origin of death, and sacrifice.

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THIS Bibliography is strictly limited in its scope. It has reference primarily to Indian oral literature and comment upon it. It does not include works of Hindu fiction, but attempts to give an account of collections of tales which are genuinely oral and popular among the folk and which have been translated into English. Works of critical comment and some books which are referred to in the text and are necessary for the study of Indian folklore are also included.

Throughout the book references are made to works listed in this Bibliography by quoting the name of the author only in the case of the first book attributed to him, and by his name and short title in the case of his other works.

I have been at great pains to get the titles of works, which are frequently misquoted, as accurate as possible, and the following list will correct any mistakes in the body of the book. The war-time scarcity of metal which demanded the printing-off of each forme as it was completed and my geographical remoteness from the press—proofs sometimes took ten days to reach me—has resulted in a few misquotations and misprints, which I heartily regret, but which now can be corrected from the Bibliography. For example, on p. 133 Sir J. G. Frazer appears with an incomprehensible 's' in his name; on p. 266 Mrs F. A. Steel has a third 'e' to which she has no title; on p. 275 footnote 8 contains three slips in only twice as many words: Pantalù has a redundant 'l', *Folklore* an unauthorized hyphen, and *Telugus* has an 'e' too many; on p. 354 the word *Folk* appears instead of *Fairy* in the title of Miss Stokes' book of stories. My most annoying mistake was due to bad proof-reading rather than to ignorance. On p. 267 I give the name of Swynnerton's book as *Indian Nights' Entertainments*, though I was well aware that, unlike Burton and Natesa Sastri, that admirable cleric preferred his entertainments to be as singular as they were discreet. It is only a small consolation to find that the great Penzer made the same mistake before me no fewer than three times in *The Ocean of Story* before he corrected it, as I have done, in the Bibliography.

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APPENDIX FOUR

GLOSSARY

- AKABAR—The great banyan, *Ficus bengalensis*, Linn.
 AONRA—*Emblica officinalis*, Gaertn. See note on p. 59.
 BAEL—*Aegle marmelos*, Correa.
 BABIDHANI—A name given to the late Maharani of Bastar; here used generally for a princess.
 BADI—A vagrant tribe, probably the same as Nat.
 BAIKAGI—A Hindu ascetic.
 BANIA—A merchant.
 BARHI—A ceremony held on the twelfth day after birth.
 BHATO—Elder sister's husband.
 BEGAR—Compulsory labour, often exacted by landlords as a form of additional rent.
 BEL—See Bael.
 BESSRA—A great bird, probably an eagle.
 BETEL—The leaf of the *Piper betle*, Linn., which is wrapped round a bit of areca nut, smeared with lime, and chewed. For a full account, see Penzer, VIII, 237-319.
 BEWAR—The axe-cultivation of the Baiga. See note on p. 185.
 BHAGAVAN—The Supreme Being. See also Mahapurub.
 BHAI-BOHU—Younger brother's wife.
 BHAUJI—An elder brother's wife, traditionally free with the younger brother.
 BHOI—Term of respect for a Gond.
 BHOIR—The wild plum, *Zizyphus jujuba*, Lam.
 BHUTYA—A large tribe of Bihar, Orissa and the eastern Central Provinces.
 BHUT—A ghost.
 BO-BO BREAD—A special kind of wheat-cake or chapati.
 BOD FISH—A popular fish which is the totem of a Muria clan.
 CHAMAR—The caste of leather-workers, generally despized.
 CHANNA—A gram, *cicer arietinum*.
 CHAPA—Probably the *son-champa*, the *Michelia champaca*, Linn., tall tree with sweet-smelling yellow flowers.
 CHAPRASI—A messenger or guard, generally in uniform.
 CHAR—*Buchanania latifolia*, Roxb.
 CHAR-CHIRONJI—A sweet made with the *char* fruit and sugar.
 CHATTI—A ceremony performed on the sixth day after birth.
 CHELIK—A boy member of the Muria dormitory.
 CHERTA—A children's festival held in January.
 CHHIND—The date palm, *Phoenix sylvestris*, Roxb.
 CHIKKARA—A fiddle.
 CHIROTA—A popular wild vegetable.

CHITAL—The deer, *cervus axis*.

CHUNNAT—A decorated shoe.

CHURELIN—The usually dangerous ghost of a woman who has died in pregnancy or childbirth.

DAHI—A method of axe-cultivation which consists in manuring a regular field by spreading branches over it and firing them.

DANO—An ogre.

DANTAR—An ogre.

DAPHLA—A sort of tambourine.

DARBAR—General name for a State Administration; specially applied to the hall where the Raja sits in judgement or to the people assembled there.

DEWAR—(a) A husband's younger brother (b) A Baiga magician.

DHOL—A large drum used at weddings.

DHOLKI—A smaller drum of the same type.

DHOTI—A man's loin-cloth.

DHULIA—A depressed Hindu caste of drummers and bamboo-workers.

DHUMER—A fig tree, *Ficus glomerata*, Roxb.

DIPPA—A Gondi word for axe-cultivation. See note on p. 185.

DIWALI—The Hindu festival of lights.

DIWAN—The Prime Minister of a State.

DONDERA—A beautiful, but unidentified, flower.

DUB—A sacred grass, *Cynodon dactylon*, Pres.

DUBKI—A ducking game played in a tank.

DUGGI—A small drum played with the Tabla.

EKTI—A festival.

FAKIR—A wandering ascetic.

GAITA—A Maria or Muria village priest or headman.

GALI—Abuse.

GANDA—A despized Hindu caste of weavers.

GANJA—An intoxicant, often taken in the form of *bhāṅg*.

GAUR—*Gavaeus gaurus*.

GHASIA—A feared and despized Hindu caste of brass-workers.

GHEE—Clarified butter.

GHOTUL—The dormitory club of the Muria.

GOTIA—A fruit.

GUNIA—A magician.

GUR—Country sugar.

HALDI—Turmeric, much used in weddings.

HALWA—A sweet made of flour, dried fruit, and ghee.

HIRWA—A pulse.

JAWA—A thin gruel. See Pej.

JETH—The Hindu month May-June, immediately preceding the rains.

JHOJAN—Sanskrit *yojan*, a measure of four kos or twelve miles.

JITKA—A bamboo fish trap. See *The Baiga*, p. 83.

JOGI—A Hindu ascetic, one who practises *Yoga*.

JOHAR—A common formula of greeting.

- KADAM—The tree, *Anthocephalus cadamba*, Miq.
KAHAR—A caste of domestic servants and palanquin-bearers, probably much the same as the Dhimar.
KALAR—The Hindu caste of liquor-distillers and vendors.
KATH-BHAINA—A branch of the Baiga tribe.
KAWAR—A pole with a net at either end for carrying loads.
KEWAT—A Hindu caste of fisherfolk.
KHADI—Home-spun cloth.
KHAMER—The tree, *Trewia nudiflora*, Linn.
KINDRI—A fiddle.
KODON—The popular small millet, *paspalum scrobiculatum*.
KOITUR—Literally, 'man'; used of aboriginals, specially of the Gond.
KOS—About three miles. See note on p. 9.
KOTRI—A small fish.
KOTWAR—A village watchman.
KOWA—A sort of cheese.
KURO—A measure equal to five seer.
KUTKI—A small millet, called *kosra* in Halbi, *panicum psilipodium* or *miliaceum*.
LADDU—A sweet made of sugar and channa pulse.
LAGIR—The critical point of a marriage ceremony.
LAKH—100,000.
LALPILA—A prince.
LAMANA—A caste of gypsies and drivers of pack-bullocks.
LAMSENA—A youth who serves for his wife instead of paying bride-price, usually accepted in a home where there is no son.
LARU—A pig dedicated to Narayan Deo, kept for three years and then sacrificed.
LICHI—A fruit.
LOHAR—The Hindu caste of blacksmiths; they do not usually smelt ore.
MACHAN—A wooden platform built in a tree for shooting game or watching crops.
MAHAPRASAD—The highest of the various grades of covenanted friendship.
MAHAPURUB—The Supreme Being. Mode of address to a chaprasi.
MAHARA—A Hindu caste of weavers. In Mandla, where they mostly belong to the Kabir Panth, they are not regarded as untouchable.
MAHARAJ—A term meaning 'Sir' and applied to anyone of importance.
MAHUA—The precious tree, *Bassia latifolia*, Roxb.
MAILLOTIA—A term of abuse, implying incest with the mother.
MALIKIN—Wife of the master or owner.
MALIN—A woman gardener.
MANDAR—A long double-membraned drum, of wood or earthenware.
MANJHI—A headman.
MANJHPUR—The Middle World.
MANTRA—A magic charm or spell.
MANTRI—An important State official, a secretary.

- MARAR—A Hindu cultivating caste.
- MOHUR—A gold coin.
- MOTIARI—Generally applied to any unmarried girl; here specially to girl members of the Muria dormitory.
- MUKHTYAR—An agent, often the clerk in charge of a landlord's estates.
- MUNG—The pulse, *phaseolus mungo*.
- MUNSHI—A clerk.
- NANGARA—A large drum with a single face, used at weddings.
- PAILI—A measure of a little more than a seer.
- PANNARIN—A woman of the Pannara or Mahara caste.
- PANDIT—A learned man, generally a Brahmin.
- PARGANA—A sub-division of a Tahsil or Zamindari in Bastar State.
- PASRA—Bazaar liquor.
- PEJ—A thin gruel, called jawa in Halbi, the staple food of the aboriginals.
- PENDA—Axe-cultivation; the same as bewar. See note on p. 185.
- PERI—A fairy.
- PHANG—An unidentified tree, the root of which is supposed to possess magic properties against snake-bite.
- PHULI—More properly spelt 'Fully', since it seems to be derived from the English 'fully distilled' liquor.
- PHUNDARA—Also spelt here *pundara* and *phundra*, each representing local variations of pronunciation. A coloured woollen cord to tie up the hair.
- PIPAL—The sacred fig, *Ficus religiosa*, Linn.
- PRET—Properly a corpse, often used for a ghost.
- PUJA—Worship or sacrifice.
- PUROHIT—A Hindu priest.
- RAJ—A kingdom.
- RAJA—The Ruler of an Indian State, a king.
- RAJKUMARI—A princess.
- RAKSA—Also Rakshasa or Rakas. An ogre.
- RAMBI—A bird, probably the maina.
- RANI—A queen.
- RAWAT—Ahir or Kopa. The Hindu caste of cowherds.
- RUSI—A Rishi or sage.
- SADHU—A Hindu ascetic, often of doubtful character.
- SALPHI—Halbi for sago palm, *Caryota urens*, Linn.
- SAMBHAR—The deer, *cervus unicolor* or *equinus*.
- SAMDHI—The relation between two parents-in-law. The father of my son's wife, for example, is my samdhi.
- SARAI—The fine tree, *Shorea robusta*, Gaertn.
- SARANGI—A fiddle with horsehair strings, played with a bow.
- SARI—A woman's cloth.
- SATI—A woman who immolates herself on her dead husband's funeral pyre.

SEMUR—The cotton tree, *Bombax malabaricum*, D.C.

SETH—A rich merchant.

SHIKARI—A hunter.

SIHAR—The fruit of the elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*, W. & A.

SOLI—A measure which holds 40 tolas of rice; a tola is the weight of a rupee.

SUKLA—Spear grass, *Andropogon contortus*, Linn.

SUMA—Sabai grass, *Pollinidium binatum*.

TABLA—A small drum, played together with the Duggi.

TAHSIL—A sub-division of a State or District, administered by a Tahsildar.

TARBHUM—The Lower World.

TELI—The Hindu caste of oil-pressers and vendors.

TENDU—The ebony tree, much used in magic, *Diospyros melanoxylon*, Roxb.

TIKA—A ceremonial mark of greeting applied to the forehead.

TILWAN—*Wendlandia exserta*, D.C.

TULSI—The sacred basil plant.

UPARPUR—The Upper World.

URID—The pulse, *phaseolus radiatus*.

VAZIR—Also Wuzzeer. A Prime Minister of a State.

ZAMINDAR—The landlord of a great estate.

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